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A FEELING FOR THE STUDENT: UNDERSTANDING THE ART OF CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT

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ABSTRACT

This report describes the fifth in a series of investigations of the nature, role, and quality of teacher-developed classroom assessments. The purpose of this research program is to provide a clear picture of the assessment demands of the classroom so teacher educators can plan assessment training that is relevant to teachers' needs. The purpose of this particular study was to develop instrumentation for the observation and description of individual teachers' classroom assessment environments. Beginning with a general observational framework from a previous study, four researchers each observed and described two classroom assessment environments. Classrooms studied included high school mathematics, science, language arts, and social studies contexts. After completing observations and interviews with teachers and students, researchers revised the framework and prepared a profile of each classroom assessment environment. Each profile explores the teacher's reasons for assessment, the assessment methodology used, the factors considered by the teacher in selecting those methods, the quality of assessments, the teacher's use of feedback, the teacher's perceptions of students, and the effect of policy on classroom assessment. Based on a synthesis of profiles, generalizations are drawn about: (1) the nature, role, and quality of classroom assessment; and (2) teacher and principal assessment training needs. (Author/JAZ)

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ABSTRACT

This report describes the fifth in a series of investigations of the nature, role and quality of teacher-developed classroom assessments. The purpose of this research program is to provide a clear picture of the assessment demands of the classroom so teacher educators can plan assessment training that is relevant to teachers' needs. The purpose of this particular study in the series was to develop instrumentation for the observation and description of individual teachers' classroom assessment environments. Once developed, such instrumentation will serve as a valuable classroom observation and feedback tool and a useful research tool for comparing environments across grades and subjects.

Beginning with a general observational framework from a previous study, four researchers observed and described two classroom assessment environments each. Classrooms studied included high school mathematics, science, language arts and social studies contexts. After completing observations and interviews with teachers and students, researchers revised the framework and the researchers prepared a profile of each classroom assessment environment they studied. Those profiles are presented herein. Each explores the teacher's reasons for assessment, the assessment methodology used, the factors considered by the teacher in selecting those methods, the quality of assessments, the teacher's use of feedback, the teacher's perceptions of students, and the effect of policy on classroom assessment.

Based on a synthesis of profiles, generalizations are drawn about (a) the nature, role and quality of classroom assessment and (b) teacher and principal assessment training needs.

CHAPTER 1: RESEARCH OVERVIEW

In recent years, the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory's Center for Performance Assessment has been conducting an ongoing program of research on the nature, role and quality of classroom assessment. The focal point of this research is the assessment procedures teachers develop and use on a day to day basis to measure the achievement and affective characteristics of students. The research reported here represents the fifth study in this research program and the second dealing with the goal of developing the instrumentation needed to profile the characteristics of teachers' classroom assessment environments. The entire series of studies is reviewed below in order to set the context for the investigation reported herein.

The rationale for this program of research is described in great depth and detail elsewhere (Stiggins, 1985 and Stiggins, Conklin & Bridgeford, 1986) and therefore is not recounted here. Suffice it to say that the measurement research community has long neglected the study of classroom assessment in favor of research on topics relevant to large-scale, standardized testing programs. Consequently, the assessment training offered to teachers has consistently reflected naive perspectives regarding the task demands of the classroom. The training has often been seen by teachers as irrelevant and insensitive to their needs. As a result, such training often is not required as part of either teacher or administrator professional preparation programs. Therefore, teachers can spend as much as a quarter to a third of their instructional time involved in assessment activities which, by their own admission, they are not trained to handle. Furthermore, these activities are carried out in a context supervised by a principal who has no more assessment training than the teacher.

The purpose of this research is to provide the depth of understanding needed to plan relevant, useful classroom assessment training for teachers and administrators. In short, the research is based on the proposition that effective instruction is only possible if it is based on the sound assessment of student characteristics. Sound assessment is only possible with high quality teacher and administrator training in assessment. Sound training, in turn, is only possible with a clear understanding of the task demands of classroom assessment.

Overview of the Research Program

The first study in the sequence, conducted in 1982, was designed to provide a very general picture of classroom assessment from the teacher's point of view. Teachers' perceptions were gathered via small group discussions structured around assessment issues. Study two, completed in 1983, was intended to add detail to the picture. Using the results of study one, researchers devised a protocol for one-on-one structured interviews of over 100 teachers regarding their classroom assessment methods. The results of study two provided sufficient focus to the research questions to permit the development of the comprehensive questionnaire needed for a broad sampling of classroom assessment practices. This instrument served as the basis for study three, which probed the practices of a stratified sample of teachers across the nation and provided a high resolution portrait of classroom assessment, as described by the teachers who carry it out (Stiggins & Bridgeford, 1985).

This sequence of three studies contributed significantly to our understanding of the assessment demands of the classroom. As a result, we were able to devise new training materials that helped teachers meet some of those demands. Examples include training guides on:

Classroom Applications of Writing Assessment (by Vicki Spandel, 1982, published in 1984 by NWREL; reprinted in 1985),

Evaluating Students by Classroom Observation (by Richard Stiggins, 1984, published by NEA and revised for republication in 1986), and

Measuring Thinking Skills in the Classroom (by Richard Stiggins, Evelyn Rubel & Edys Quellmalz, published in 1986 by NEA)

However, as productive as these three studies were, they shared one common shortcoming which tended to constrain the depth of understanding provided by each. Essentially, they reported what teachers said they did in classroom assessment. But we were unable to discern if discrepancies existed between teacher self-reports and actual classroom practices. The only viable research strategy for describing actual classroom assessment practices was the observation of those practices as they were carried out in the classroom. Therefore, survey research methods were replaced by ethnographic (participant observer) methods for studies four and five.

In study four (Stiggins, Conklin, Bridgeford & Brody, 1985), two data collection methods were used. In the first, three researchers became teachers aides in 6th grade classrooms. Using a very general set of guiding issues, they observed and recorded assessment events as they unfolded, interacting as needed with teacher and students to understand how events were perceived. In addition, thirty-two teachers from a variety of grade levels were asked to keep journals in which they described key assessment events over a 10-week period. Results of the observation and journal analyses were synthesized to produce the initial version of a profile of a classroom assessment environment--an instrument which would allow researchers to efficiently map the key characteristics of an environment. This profiling instrument served as the basis of study five, which is the focus of this report.

Study Five Methodology

The goal of study five was to use the profiling instrument (which was devised at the junior high level) to map assessment environments at the high school level in order to (a) explore the efficiency and applicability of the instrument in the new context and (b) discover its sensitivity to differences in assessment environments. We sought to evaluate and refine the profiling instrument because it has the potential of (a) providing teachers with precise feedback on strengths and weaknesses in their assessment environments, and (b) serving as a valuable research tool for the further investigation of assessment environments across grade levels and subjects. In either case, such instrumentation would provide a powerful microscope to use in planning relevant teacher training in assessment.

Teachers Studied. A total of 8 high school teachers were studied. All were recommended for the study by their principal and each agreed to participate. Thus, in effect, all teachers were volunteers. Of the total, two teachers were chosen from four subject matter areas: math, science, social studies and language arts. Each was a veteran teacher, teaching a range of content in their field, from remedial or beginning courses to advanced courses.

Profile Elements. Based on the results of study four, researchers conducted study five case studies with the intent of profiling the assessment environments according to the following framework.

FACTORS INFLUENCING THE CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT ENVIRONMENT

Factor	Relevant Continuum	Data Collection
1. Teacher Characteristics		
A. Knowledge of assessment methodology		
(1) Paper and pencil test development	Well informed-uninformed	Test (oral or written) Self report (discussion or interview) Observation of assessments
(2) Paper and pencil test use		
(3) Performance assessment development		
(4) Performance assessment use		
(5) Oral questioning strategies		
(6) Test analysis strategies		
(7) Test score interpretations and use		
(8) Grading strategies		
(9) Assessing thinking skills		
B. Classroom Experience		
(1) In district	Experienced-inexperienced (in years)	Self report
(2) In school		
(3) At grade level		
(4) With content		
C. Personal Characteristics of Teacher		
(1) Perceived autonomy in classroom	Servant of parents/schools-independent professional	Interview
(2) Expectations of professional self	Expect little-expect a lot	Interview
(3) Orientation to classroom structure	Rigid-flexible	Interview
(4) Definition of high quality performance	Right/wrong-range of quality	Observation
(5) Attention to exceptional student	Never-frequent	Observation
(6) Sense of student norms	Clear-unclear	Interview
(7) Willingness to experiment with class	No risks-risk taker	Interview
(8) Willingness to experiment with student	No risks-risk taker	Interview
(9) Orientation to class	One on one-group	Observation
(10) Expectations of working relationships	Cooperation-competition	Interview, observation
(11) Attributions of success/failure of students	Student responsible-teacher responsible	Interview
(12) Orientation to punctuality	Demand it-unconcerned	Observation
(13) Definition of "on-task"		Interview

Factor	Relevant Continuum	Data Collection
D. Teacher's Perceptions of Current Class		
(1) Ability to learn	Low-high	Interview, discussion
(2) Variation in ability		
(3) Rate of achievement	Low-high, Accelerating-deceleration	
(4) Variation in rate	High-low	
(5) Willingness to learn		
(6) Variation in willingness		
(7) Maturity	Responsible-irresponsible	
(8) Study skills	Developed-undeveloped Follow directions-have difficulty with same	
(9) Social skills	Developed-undeveloped Cooperative-disruptive Complaint-resistant	
(10) Willingness to perform	Willing-reticent Passive-aggressive	
(11) Gender differences	Important-unimportant Related interactions?	Observation
(12) Feedback needs	Frequent-infrequent Individual-group Verbal-models	
(13) Self-assessment skills	Developed-undeveloped	
(14) Student sense of what's fair	Clear-unclear	
(15) Reactions to testing	Positive-negative Anxious-tranquil	
(16) Parental expectations	Clear-unclear High-low	
E. Valued reasons for assessment		
(1) Diagnosing group needs	Important-unimportant	Interview with anecdotes from observation
(2) Diagnosing individual needs		
(3) Sizing students up in fall		
(4) Selecting for special services		
(5) Controlling students		
(6) Motivating students		
(7) Evaluating instruction		
(8) Communicating academic expectations		
(9) Communicating behavioral expectations		
(10) As test taking training for students		

Factor	Relevant Continuum	Data Collection
F. Valued Assessment Methods		
(1) Daily written assignments	Useful-useless	Interview
(2) Observation and judgment		
(3) Paper and pencil tests		
(4) Assessments from text		
(5) Assessments from other teachers		
(6) Oral recitation in class		
(7) Standardized tests		
(8) Student peer assessment		
(9) Student self assessment		
(10) Group assessments		
G. Valued Strategies for Communicating Expectations		
(1) Written, verbal	Useful-useless	Interview
(2) Oral		
(3) Via model or example		
(4) Via assessments		
H. Strategies for Providing Feedback to		
(1) Students		Observation
(a) formality	Formal-informal	
(b) mode	Written-oral	
(c) frequency	Never-continuously	
(d) form	Grades-comments	
	Private-public	
(e) focus	Achievement?	
	Ability?	
	Social personal traits?	
(2) Parents		
(a) formality	Formal-informal	
(b) mode	Written-oral	
(c) frequency	Never-continuously	
(d) form	Grades-comments	
	Private-public	
(e) focus	Achievement?	
	Ability?	
	Social personal traits?	
(3) Supervisors		
(a) formality	Formal-informal	
(b) mode	Written-oral	
(c) frequency	Never-continuously	
(d) form	Grades-comments	
	Private-public	
(e) focus	Achievement?	
	Ability?	
	Social personal traits?	

Factor	Relevant Continuum	Data Collection
2. Classroom Characteristics		
A. Staffing and Organization		Observation
(1) Teachers present	Alone-team	
(2) Teacher aid	Available?	
(3) Parental assistance	Never-frequently	
(4) Free planning periods	None-many	
B. Use of Space		
(1) Density of students (space/student)	Much-little	Observation
(2) Physical arrangement	Describe it	
(3) Assessment displays		
(a) records of achievement	Present?	
(b) models of good work		
(4) Neatness and order criteria	Explicit-implicit	
(5) Strategies for noise control during assessment	Present-absent Rigorously applied?	
(a) specific rules		
(b) seating arrangements		
C. Support for Assessment		Observation
(1) Resources such as library, movies, etc.	Available? Used?	
(2) Equipment such as size lab	Available? Used?	
(3) Facilities such as computers and overflow space	Available? Used?	
3. School and District Policy		Overt policy-see policy manuals
A. Standardized Testing Policy		Covert policy-interview administrators
(1) Sense of accountability for scores	Strong-weak	
(2) Scores valued and used	Useful-useless	
(3) Time committed to testing	(In hours)	
(4) Perceive importance of testing experience	Important-unimportant	
B. Policy Regarding Recordkeeping and Reporting		
(1) Frequency	Frequent-infrequent	

Factor	Relevant Continuum	Data Collection
(2) Content	Achievement? Ability? Social personal traits?	
(3) Form	Standard-individual Grades-comments	
(4) Target of reports	Students? Parents? Supervisors?	
C. Policy Regarding Homework		
(1) Frequency	Intervals or frequency specified?	
(2) Form of homework required	Written only?	
(3) Grading policy	% cutoffs?	
(4) Time appropriation	Specified?	
(5) Reliance on text assignments	Required?	
D. Policy Regarding Grouping for Special Services (L.D., Gifted, Chapter 1, etc.)		
(1) Data requirements	Clear-unclear	
(2) Classroom data allowed	Grades-comments	
(3) Criteria for selection	Clear-unclear	
E. Valued District Uses of Test Data		
(1) To establish teacher accountability	Important-unimportant	
(2) To compare schools, classes, etc.		
(3) To show achievement trends		
4. Characteristics of Texts and Materials		
A. Assessments Provided in Texts (may vary with subject)		Examine tests & associated materials
(1) Discussion questions for class recitation	Present-absence	
(2) Homework assignments in text		
(3) Workbook study sheets		
(4) Assessment guidelines in teacher's guide		
(5) Paper and pencil tests		
(6) Performance assessments		

Factor	Relevant Continuum	Data Collection
B. Quality of Assessments Offered		
(1) Validity		
(a) match content of text	Miss-match	
(b) match cognitive levels of text and recitation		
(c) sample representatively?		
(2) Reliability		
(a) length	Appropriate-inappropriate	
(b) methods	Objective-subjective	
(c) item construction	Clear-unclear	
(d) scoring guidelines	Absent-detailed	
(3) Ease of use	Convenient-inconvenient	
C. Nontext Materials Used in Assessment?	(describe them)	
5. Characteristics of School Subject		
A. Perceived Importance of Subject as Seen by (will vary by subject)		
(1) Students	Important-unimportant	Interview
(2) Parents		
(3) Teachers		
(4) School		
(5) District		
B. Other Indicators of Importance (by subject)	Time allotted Required-optional	Examine records
C. Relationship of Content to Assessment Options (by subject)		Examine content
(1) Written assignments	Amenable to content-not amenable	
(2) Teacher observation and judgment		
(3) Classroom paper and pencil tests		
(4) Assessments from texts		
(5) Assessments from other teachers		
(6) Oral recitation		
(7) Self assessments		
(8) Peer assessments		
(9) Standardized tests		
(10) Group assessment		
(11) Application of rules of evidence	Punctual completion-quality Right/wrong-degrees of quality	

Factor	Relevant Continuum	Data Collection
6. Characteristics of Assessments		
A. Assessment Purposes Demonstrated (may vary with subject)		Observation
(1) Diagnosing group needs	Never used-frequently used	
(2) Diagnosing individual needs		
(3) Sizing students up in fall		
(4) Selecting for special services		
(5) Controlling students		
(6) Motivating students		
(7) Evaluating instruction		
(8) Communicating academic expectations		
(9) Communicating behavioral expectations		
(10) As test taking training for students		
B. Assessment Practices Used (may vary with subject)		Observation
(1) Daily written assignments	Never used-frequently used	
(2) Observation and judgment		
(3) Paper and pencil tests		
(4) Assessments from text		
(5) Assessments from other teachers		
(6) Oral recitation in class		
(7) Standardized tests		
(8) Student peer assessment		
(9) Student self assessment		
(10) Group assessments		
C. Categories of Thinking Skills Addressed		Observation
(1) Levels defined	No-clearly	
(2) Levels in assessment match instruction	Miss-match	
(3) Describe levels used		
D. Criteria Used by Teacher in Selecting Method		Interview
(1) Fit of results to purpose	Important-unimportant	
(2) Match to material taught	Evaluated how?	
(3) Ease of development (easy access)		
(4) Ease of scoring		
(5) Origin of test		
(6) Time required to administer		
(7) Degree of objectivity		
(8) Test security		

Factor	Relevant Continuum	Data Collection
E. Quality of Assessments		Examine assessments
(1) Validity		
(a) match to content	Miss-match	
(b) match to cognitive levels		
(c) representative sample?		
(2) Reliability		
(a) length	Appropriate-inappropriate	
(b) methods	Objective-subjective	
(c) item construction	Clear-unclear	
(d) scoring procedures	Appropriate-inappropriate	

Data Collection. All participating teachers were observed extensively in the classroom context by one of four researchers. The frequency and length of observation varied, depending on the researchers level of understanding of assessment procedures. Each teacher was interviewed, often on several occasions, as were students. Further, each teacher provided records and documentation of assessment and grading practices. In each case, principals were asked to provide documentation regarding assessment and grading policy.

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CHAPTER 2: REVISION OF THE PROFILE

At the completion of the high school observations, the researchers agreed that the profile of classroom assessment environment elements generated from study four cases was inadequate and needed major revision. For that reason, the research team initiated a major reevaluation and development of the profile instrument. The result was a refined and much clearer set of profile elements, each of which was acccmpanied by a concise definition and set of scales upon which to describe a particular classroom. Each scale was defined in terms of key questions to be answered on the basis of assessment, observation or interview to carry out the rating. The revised profile is presented in the chart that follows.

CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT ENVIRONMENT PROFILE

Factor Identification	Definition of Factor	Key Questions to Answer	Measurement Method
I. ASSESSMENT PURPOSES	Description of the various role of assessment in the classroom.	How well informed is the teacher about each purpose?	Oral assessment
		How relevant is that purpose for the context?	Researcher judgment based on observation and interview
		Does the teacher see that use of assessments as valuable to them?	Self report by teacher
		Does the teacher in fact use assessments in that way?	Observation of classroom
A. Diagnosing individual needs of students	Identifying student strengths and weaknesses	Informed:	
		Is the teacher aware of individual differences?	Interview
		Can the teacher specify ways to diagnose?	Oral assessment
		Has the teacher developed the tools to diagnose?	Observation, interview
		Relevant:	
		Is the material amenable to individualization?	Observation, interview
		Does the student load realistically allow individualization?	Observation, interview
		Useful:	
		Is this use of assessment perceived by the teacher as valuable and useful?	Interview
		Used:	
		Is at least some instruction individualized?	Observation
B. Diagnosing group needs	Detecting common instructional needs across a group of students	Informed:	
		Can the teacher specify ways to detect group needs?	Oral assessment
		Can the teacher specify ways to summarize group assessment results?	
		Relevant:	
		Is group diagnosis useful in this context?	Observation, interview
		Useful:	
		Does the teacher value this strategy?	Interview
		Used:	
		Is there evidence of such diagnosis?	Observation

Factor Identification	Definition of Factor	Key Questions to Answer	Measurement Method
C. Assigning grades	Determining letter grades for report cards as feedback to students and parents	**Informed:**	
		Has the teacher considered alternative ingredients?	Oral assessment
		Does the teacher have a sound philosophy about ingredients and their weighting?	Interview
		Relevant:	
		Are grades required in this context?	Policy analysis
		Useful:	
		Does the teacher regard grades as a valuable use of assessment results?	Interview
		Used:	
		Does the teacher assign grades?	Observation
D. Grouping for instruction within class	Subdividing a class into smaller instructional groups on assessment results	**Informed:**	
		Does the teacher have specific reasons for grouping?	Interview
		Does the teacher have specific methods of grouping?	Oral assessment
		Can the teacher specify a strategy for using assessment results in grouping process (with rationale)?	Oral assessment
		Relevant:	
		Does grouping make sense in this context?	Observation, interview
		Useful:	
		Does the teacher value assessment results in grouping?	Interview
		Used:	
		Does the teacher actually group based on results?	Observation
E. Identifying students for special services	Selection for placement into advanced or remedial programs	**Informed:**	
		Does the teacher know selection policy?	Oral assessment
		Can the teacher have specific strategies for using assessment in this context?	Oral assessment
		Relevant:	
		Does the teacher play a role in selection?	Policy analysis
		Useful:	
		Does the teacher see this as a valuable use of assessment?	Interview
		Used:	
		Does the teacher select based on results?	Observation

Factor Identification	Definition of Factor	Key Questions to Answer	Measurement Method
F. Controlling and motivating students	Using assessment or the prospect of assessment to cause students to behave in a specific way; such as using assessment for punishment	Informed: Can the teacher specify reasons for using assessment this way? Can the teacher specify strategies for doing so?	 Oral assessment Oral assessment
		Relevant: Does it make sense to use assessment as a control mechanism?	 Observation, interview
		Useful: Does the teacher value this use of assessment?	 Interview
		Used: Does the teacher use assessment to control and motivate?	 Observation
G. Evaluating instruction	Documenting the success or failure of a particular instructional treatment	Informed: Does the teacher know how to evaluate? Does the teacher have specific evaluation strategies?	 Oral assessment Oral assessment
		Relevant: Does it make sense to evaluate this instruction?	 Observation, interview
		Useful: Does the teacher feel evaluation is important?	 Interview
		Used: Is there evidence that evaluations are conducted?	 Observation
H. Communicating achievement expectations	Informing students of the nature of the content and skills they are to learn	Informed: Can the teacher cite alternative strategies for communicating expectations in general? via assessment?	 Oral assessment
		Relevant: Is it important to inform students of expectations in this context?	 Observation, interview
		Useful: Does the teacher see assessment as a valuable vehicle for such communication?	 Interview
		Used: Does the teacher use this vehicle?	 Observation

Factor Identification	Definition of Factor	Key Questions to Answer	Measurement Method
I. Communicating affective or behavioral expectations	Informing students of the nature of the attitudes, values, preference, and behavioral patterns that are acceptable	Informed: Does the teacher understand how this might be done in general? via assessment?	Oral assessment
		Relevant: Is it important to communicate such expectations in this context? via assessment?	Interview, observation
		Useful: Does the teacher value this use of assessment?	Interview
		Used: Does the teacher use assessment in this way?	
J. Providing test taking experience	Familiarizing students with item types and test conditions to prepare them for future tests	Informed: Does the teacher understand the possible benefits of this?	Oral assessment
		Does the teacher know what experiences might be helpful?	Oral assessment
		Relevant: Is test-taking skill likely to be important in this context?	Observation, interview
		Useful: Does the teacher value this use of assessment?	Interview
		Used: Does the teacher use assessment in this way?	Observation
K. Relative importance of purposes	Determining the relative importance of these purposes to the teacher	Given 100 points to distribute across these 10 purposes, how would you distribute them to show the relative importance of the various decisions listed? The more points you assign to a purpose the more important it is to you.	(1) Questionnaire (2) Researcher's observation

Factor Identification	Definition of Factor	Key Questions to Answer	Measurement Method
II. ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY			
A. Assessment of achievement			
1. Teacher-developed paper and pencil tests and quizzes	Multiple-choice, true/false, matching, fill-in and essay tests designed and written by the teacher	Informed:	
		Has the teacher been trained in test development?	Interview
		Does the teacher develop test blueprints?	Observation
		Can the teacher identify traits of sound test items?	Oral assessment
		How does the teacher determine test quality?	Oral assessment
		Relevant:	
		Can material taught be tested via this method?	Observation
		Useful:	
		Does the teacher think this method is useful?	Interview
		Used:	
		Does the teacher in fact use this method?	Observation
2. Text-embedded paper and pencil tests and quizzes	Multiple-choice, true/false, matching, fill-in and essay tests provided by the text publisher	Informed:	
		Does the text offer assessments and is the teacher aware of them?	Observation, interview
		Has the teacher evaluated the assessments?	Interview
		According to what criteria?	Oral assessment
		Relevant:	
		Can material taught be tested via this method?	Observation
		Useful:	
		Does the teacher think this method is useful?	Interview
		Used:	
		Does the teacher in fact use this method?	Observation
3. Performance assessments	Measurement via observation of student products and behaviors and evaluation via professional judgment	Informed:	
		Are exercises clear and representative?	Observation
		Are traits to be measured and performance criteria clearly stated?	Interview, observation
		Are scoring procedures spelled out?	Interview
		How does the teacher determine PA quality?	Oral assessment
		Relevant:	
		Can material taught be tested via this method?	Observation
		Useful:	
		Does the teacher think this method is useful?	Interview
		Used:	
		Does the teacher in fact use this method?	Observation

Factor Identification	Definition of Factor	Key Questions to Answer	Measurement Method
4. Oral questioning strategies	Questions asked by the teacher during instruction	**Informed:**	
		Are all students possible respondents?	Observation
		Does the teacher wait for a response?	Observation
		Is sustaining feedback given?	Observation (see part _________)
		Does the teacher keep written records?	Observation
		Relevant:	
		Can material taught be tested via this method?	Observation
		Useful:	
		Does the teacher think this method is useful?	Interview
		Used:	
		Does the teacher in fact use this method?	Observation
5. Standardized tests	School, district, state-wide or program related assessments based on large-scale administration of published tests	**Informed:**	
		Does the teacher understand differences among tests?	Oral assessment
		Can the teacher interpret test scores accurately?	Oral assessment
		How does the teacher determine the quality of such tests?	Interview
		Has the teacher been trained in standardized test use?	Interview
		Relevant:	
		Can material taught be tested via this method?	Observation
		Useful:	
		Does the teacher think this method is useful?	Interview
		Used:	
		Does the teacher in fact use this method?	Observation
6. Group assessment methods	Assessments in which students work together for a group grade or an individual grade	**Informed:**	
		Is the teacher aware of potential problems with a lack of independence?	Oral assessment
		Does the teacher have strategies for avoiding those problems?	Oral assessment
		Relevant:	
		Can material taught be tested via this method?	Observation
		Useful:	
		Does the teacher think this method is useful?	Interview
		Used:	
		Does the teacher in fact use this method?	Observation

Factor Identification	Definition of Factor	Key Questions to Answer	Measurement Method
7. Opinions of other teachers	Positive or negative feelings about a student's achievement expressed by colleagues verbally or in written records.	Informed: Is the teacher sensitive to issues of bias?	Oral assessment
		How does the teacher evaluate the quality of such information?	Interview
		Relevant: Can material taught be tested via this method?	Observation
		Useful: Does the teacher think this method is useful?	Interview
		Used: Does the teacher in fact use this method?	Observation
8. Assessment of reasoning skills (See #11 below)	Measuring student's thinking skills through the application of Bloom's taxonomy or some equivalent structure	Informed: Does the teacher have a taxonomy to use regularly and consistently?	Interview
		Can the teacher ask questions at different levels?	Oral assessment
		Relevant: Can material taught be tested via this method?	Observation
		Useful: Does the teacher think this method is useful?	Interview
		Used: Does the teacher in fact use this method?	Observation
9. Regular homework assignments	Periodic assignments designed to provide practice and yield information on student performance	Informed: How does the teacher evaluate the quality of assignment-generated data?	Interview
		Do assignments have a clear set of expectations?	Interview
		Relevant: Can material taught be tested via this method?	Observation
		Useful: Does the teacher think this method is useful?	Interview
		Used: Does the teacher in fact use this method?	Observation

Factor Identification	Definition of Factor	Key Questions to Answer	Measurement Method
10. Student peer ratings	Students rate each others performance	**Informed:** Does the teacher know strategies for doing this? Is the teacher aware of the conditions that make it valid and reliable? Can the teacher specify instructional benefits of this use of assessment?	
		Relevant: Can material taught be tested via this method?	Observation
		Useful: Does the teacher think this method is useful?	Interview
		Used: Does the teacher in fact use this method?	Observation
11. Student self ratings	Students evaluate their own performance	**Informed:** Does the teacher know strategies for doing this? Is the teacher aware of the conditions that make it valid and reliable? Can the teacher specify instructional benefits of this use of assessment?	
		Relevant: Can material taught be tested via this method?	Observation
		Useful: Does the teacher think this method is useful?	Interview
		Used: Does the teacher in fact use this method?	Observation
12. Relative importance of methods	Determining the relative importance these 9 assessment methods across all purposes	Given 100 points to distribute across these 9 assessment methods, how would you distribute them to show the relative importance of each to you? Assign more points to those methods that are more important to you.	Questionnaire Observation
13. Cognitive levels of assessments	Determining the levels of cognitive operation tapped by different kinds of classroom assessments	How do text study questions and assignments distribute themselves across levels?	Observation
		How do oral questions in class distribute themselves?	Observation
		How do questions on test and quizzes distribute themselves?	

Factor Identification	Definition of Factor	Key Questions to Answer	Measurement Method
14. Strategies for integrating assessment and instruction	Using instructional methods that rely on assessment as a teaching tool, such as use of peer editing procedures to teach writing or use of practice tests to prepare for real ones.	Informed:	
		Can the teacher specify such strategies?	Interview
		Does the teacher know advantages and limitations of each?	Oral assessment
		Used:	
		Does the teacher use these strategies?	
15. Dealing with cheating	Strategies for minimizing cheating and dealing with it when it occurs.	Informed:	
		Can the teacher cite specific ways to minimize it?	Interview
		Can the teacher cite specific actions to deal with it?	Interview
		Used:	
		Does the teacher use these strategies?	
B. Assessment of affect	Measuring those affective and social characteristics of students that play a role in classroom decision making	Does the teacher have a clear sense of trait(s) to be measured?	Interview
1. Observing individual students	Inferring affective traits from the observation of the behavior of individual students	Informed:	
		Does the teacher use clear performance criteria?	Interview
		Does the teacher sample behavior representatively?	Observation
		Does the teacher know the pitfalls to sound data (e.g., does the teacher keep written records)?	Oral assessment
		Relevant:	
		Can the trait(s) to be measured be measured via this method?	Observation
		Useful:	
		Does the teacher regard this method as useful?	Interview
		Used:	
		Does the teacher in fact assess this way?	Observation

Factor Identification	Definition of Factor	Key Questions to Answer	Measurement Method
2. Observing group interactions	Inferring affective traits from observation of the social and academic interactions among students and between student and teacher	Informed: Does the teacher use clear performance criteria?	Interview
		Does the teacher sample behavior representatively?	Observation
		Does the teacher know the pitfalls to sound data (e.g., does the teacher keep written records)?	Oral assessment
		Relevant: Can the trait(s) to be measured be measured via this method?	Observation
		Useful: Does the teacher regard this method as useful?	Interview
		Used: Does the teacher in fact assess this way?	Observation
3. Using questionnaires	Paper and pencil instruments used to gather affective data	Informed: Does the teacher know the basic ingredients of questionnaire design?	Oral assessment
		Does the teacher know advantages and limitations of questionnaires?	Oral assessment
		Relevant: Can the trait(s) to be measured be measured via this method?	Observation
		Useful: Does the teacher regard this method as useful?	Interview
		Used: Does the teacher in fact assess this way?	Observation
4. Using interviews	Formal and informal one on one oral exchanges of information between teacher and student(s) to gather affective data	Informed: Does the teacher know the keys to effective interviewing?	Oral assessment
		Does the teacher know the advantages and limitations of interviews?	Oral assessment
		Relevant: Can the trait(s) to be measured be measured via this method?	Observation
		Useful: Does the teacher regard this method as useful?	Interview
		Used: Does the teacher in fact assess this way?	Observation

Factor Identification	Definition of Factor	Key Questions to Answer	Measurement Method
5. Opinions of other teachers	Comments about student affect obtained from colleagues verbally or via past student records.	**Informed:** Does the teacher know the advantages and limitations of opinions of others?	Oral assessment
		Relevant: Can the trait(s) to be measured be measured via this method?	Observation
		Useful: Does the teacher regard this method as useful?	Interview
		Used: Does the teacher in fact assess this way?	Observation
6. Opinions of other students	Comments about student affect obtained from other students	**Informed:** Does the teacher know the advantages and limitations of opinions of others?	Oral assessment
		Relevant: Can the trait(s) to be measured be measured via this method?	Observation
		Useful: Does the teacher regard this method as useful?	Interview
		Used: Does the teacher in fact assess this way?	Observation
7. Opinions of parents	Comments about student affect obtained from the student's parent or guardian	**Informed:** Does the teacher know the advantages and limitations of opinions of others?	Oral assessment
		Relevant: Can the trait(s) to be measured be measured via this method?	Observation
		Useful: Does the teacher regard this method as useful?	Interview
		Used: Does the teacher in fact assess this way?	Observation

Factor Identification	Definition of Factor	Key Questions to Answer	Measurement Method
8. Past student records	Draw inferences regarding affective characteristics from information obtained in the student's cumulative record	**Informed:** Does the teacher know what information is contained there?	
		Relevant: Can the trait(s) to be measured be measured via this method?	Observation
		Useful: Does the teacher regard this method as useful?	Interview
		Used: Does the teacher in fact assess this way?	Observation
9. Affective traits measured	Determining student traits teacher measures via above methods	List traits measured	Interview, observation
10. Constellation of affective assessment methods	Determining relative importance of these 7 assessment methods	Given 100 points to distribute across these 7 assessment methods, how would you distribute them to show the relative importance of each to you? Assign more points to those most important to you.	Questionnaire
C. Assessment of ability			
1. Meaning of ability for teacher	Operational definition of the ability construct in the view of the teacher	Is an ability factor important for the teacher?	Interview
		Does the teacher assess ability?	Interview
		What ingredients does the teacher include?	Interview
		How does the teacher measure ingredients?	Interview
2. Impact of ability assessment	Classroom decisions influenced by results of ability assessment	What decisions are influenced?	Observation, interview
		What role does the assessment play in the decision(s)?	Interview
D. Text assessments	Contributions of text-embedded or text accompanying materials that contribute to the assessment environment	What assessment components are available from the text?	Observation
		Which of the components are used?	Observation

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Factor Identification	Definition of Factor	Key Questions to Answer	Measurement Method
III. CRITERIA USED IN SELECTING ASSESSMENT METHOD	Factors considered by the teacher in devising assessment plans	What factors are considered?	
A. Results fit purpose	Results of assessment promise to fit teacher's information needs	**Informed:** Can the teacher differentiate information needs of various purposes?	Oral assessment
		Can the teacher differentiate assessments weekly to meet different information needs?	Oral assessment
		Important: Does the teacher regard this criterion as important in selecting?	Interview
		Used: Does the teacher consider this factor?	Interview
B. Method matches intended outcomes	Match between the assessment format and the student characteristic measured	**Informed:** Can the teacher differential assessment formats that will reflect different outcomes?	Oral assessment
		Important: Does the teacher regard this criterion as important in selecting?	Interview
		Used: Does the teacher consider this factor?	Interview
C. Ease of development	Amount of time, effort and technical skill required to use assessment method	**Informed:** Can the teacher differentiate assessment methods in terms of efficiency?	Oral assessment
		Important: Does the teacher regard this criterion as important in selecting?	Interview
		Used: Does the teacher consider this factor?	Interview
D. Ease of scoring	Amount of time, effort and technical skill required to score assessment	**Informed:** Can the teacher differentiate assessment methods in terms of scoring efficiency?	Oral assessment
		Important: Does the teacher regard this criterion as important in selecting?	Interview
		Used: Does the teacher consider this factor?	Interview

Factor Identification	Definition of Factor	Key Questions to Answer	Measurement Method
E. Origin of assessment	Person originally responsible for developing the assessment instrument and/or procedures	Informed: Can the teacher differentiate quality factors based on developer?	Oral assessment
		Important: Does the teacher regard this criterion as important in selecting?	Interview
		Used: Does the teacher consider this factor?	Interview
F. Time required to administer	Testing units administered per unit of time	Informed: Can the teacher differentiate between assessment formats based on efficiency of item administration?	Oral assessment
		Important: Does the teacher regard this criterion as important in selecting?	Interview
		Used: Does the teacher consider this factor?	Interview
G. Degree of objectivity	Amount of teacher judgment that goes into the scoring process	Informed: Can the teacher differentiate test formats in terms of objectivity?	Oral assessment
		Important: Does the teacher regard this criterion as important in selecting?	Interview
		Used: Does the teacher consider this factor?	Interview
H. Applicability to measuring higher order thinking skills	Extent to which assessment can serve to measure more than recall of knowledge	Informed: Can the teacher differentiate methods in terms of adaptability to higher order thinking?	Oral assessment
		Important: Does the teacher regard this criterion as important in selecting?	Interview
		Used: Does the teacher consider this factor?	Interview

Factor Identification	Definition of Factor	Key Questions to Answer	Measurement Method
I. Effective control of cheating	Contribution of method to test security and/or study copying	Informed: Can teacher differentiate methods in terms of susceptibility to cheating?	Oral assessment
		Important: Does the teacher regard this criterion as important in selecting?	Interview
		Used: Does the teacher consider this factor?	Interview
J. Relative importance of criteria	Relative emphasis given to criteria 1 to 9 above	Given 100 points to distribute across these 9 criteria, how would you distribute them to show the relative importance of these criteria in selecting your classroom assessments? Assign more points to those criteria given more weight in your selection	Questionnaire
IV. QUALITY OF ASSESSMENTS	Attributes of assessments that contribute to their dependability and efficiency	Are those attributes accounted for that maximize the reliability and validity of assessments?	
A. Paper and pencil assessments	Teacher-developed or text-embedded multiple-choice, true/fals, matching, fill-in and/or essay tests	What percent of these assessments have the following characteristics:	
		Description of test specifications	Interview
		Content coverage matching instruction	Examine tests
		Cognitive levels matching instruction	Examine tests
		Maximum items per unit of time	Examine tests
		Item format matches intended outcome	Interview
		Items clearly written	Examine tests
		Items sample domain	Examine tests
		Scoring procedures planned	Interview
		Scoring criteria for essay items	Interview
		Clear directions	Examine tests
		Quality reproduction	Examine tests
		Scheduled to minimize distractions	Interview
B. Performance Assessments	Assessment based on observation and professional judgment	What percent of these assessments have the following characteristics:	
		Trait defined with levels of proficiency	Interview
		Matches intended outcomes of instruction	Interview
		Minimizes time required to assess	Interview
		Clear performance criteria	Written documentation
		Students aware of criteria	Interview
		Quality exercises	Examine exercises
		Exercises sample domain	Interview
		Rating procedures planned	Interview
		Results match information needs	Interview

Factor Identification	Definition of Factor	Key Questions to Answer	Measurement Method
C. Oral questions	Questions asked by teacher during instruction	What percent have these characteristics:	
		All students potential respondents	Observation
		Teacher waits for a response	Observation
		Questions match cognitive levels of objectives	Observation
		Supportive feedback given	Observation
		Written records kept	Interview
V. FEEDBACK PROFILE	Nature and quality of oral, nonverbal and written feedback given to students by teacher	What are the most salient features of that feedback?	All features determined via observation and profiling of feedback events
A. Oral and nonverbal feedback	Specific features of this form of feedback	What percent of this kind of feedback is given to students who are: Strong vs weak? Correct vs incorrect? Male vs female?	
		What percent of this kind of feedback has the following characteristics: Oral vs nonverbal? Public vs private Fair vs unfair? Focused on achievement vs affective? Germane vs irrelevant? Immediate vs delayed? Positive vs negative? Delivered in class vs out of class?	
B. Written feedback	Specific features of this form for feedback	What percent is given to students who are: Strong vs weak? Correct vs incorrect? Male vs female?	
		What percent of feedback is: Comment vs symbol? Positive vs negative? Fair vs unfair? Germane vs irrelevant? Focused on achievement vs affect?	
		Does the teacher use samples of performance as basis for feedback?	
		Does the teacher display achievement records for public view?	

Factor Identification	Definition of Factor	Key Questions to Answer	Measurement Method
VII. THE TEACHER AND ASSESSMENT			
A. Teacher's background 1. Teaching experience	Years of experience with various facets of instruction	How many years of experience do you have: in the teaching field? at your current grade level? in your current school? with content?	Interview
2. Sources of assessment knowledge	Contribution of various sources to the teacher's knowledge of assessment methodology	Given 100 points to distribute across the alternative sources of knowledge about assessment, how would you distribute those points to show the relative contribution of each to your understanding? Assign more points to those that made larger contributions. Preservice and graduate teacher training Inservice training programs Ideas and suggestions of colleagues Readings from professional literature Guidebooks accompanying texts Own classroom experience Other (specify ________________)	Questionnaire
B. Teacher's time expenditures 1. Teaching time	Manner in which teacher spends instructional time	What percent of the teacher's time is spent: planning? teaching one on one? teaching groups? assessing? other (specify ________________)	Observation
2. Assessment time	Manner in which teacher uses assessment time	What percent of assessment time is spent: Reviewing and selecting assessments? Developing own assessments? Administering assessments? Scoring assessments? Recording results? Providing feedback? Evaluating assessment quality?	Observation

Factor Identification	Definition of Factor	Key Questions to Answer	Measurement Method
C. Teacher characteristics	Characteristics that the teacher brings to the classroom assessment environment	How can the teacher be profiled in terms of:	
		Role in the classroom?	Interview
		Level of professional expectations?	Interview
		Needs for structure in the classroom?	Interview, observation
		Definition of high and low quality work?	Interview
		Extent of stereotyping students?	Observation
		Attention to exceptional students?	Observation
		Sense of performance norms?	Interview
		Tendency to take risks in instruction?	Interview
		Orientation to cheating?	Interview
		Amount of cheating?	Observation, interview students
		Importance of promptness?	Observation
		Orientation to interpersonal environment?	Observation
		Cooperative *vs* competitive	
		Attribution of reason for student learning?	Interview
		Basis for grading?	Observation
		Interpretation of assessment results?	Observation
		Norm *vs* criterion referenced	
VIII. TEACHER'S PERCEPTION OF STUDENTS			
A. Ability to learn	(Defined by teacher, see section II-C-1)	Is ability high or low?	Interview
		How much variation in ability is there?	Interview
		Does the teacher accommodate variation?	Observation
B. Willingness to learn	Seriousness of purpose in school	Is willingness high or low?	Interview
		How much variation in ability is there?	Interview
		Does the teacher accommodate variation?	Observation
C. Rate of achievement	Amount of material learned per unit of time	Is achievement rate high or low?	Interview
		Is rate increasing or decreasing?	Interview
		How much variation in ability is there?	Interview
		Does the teacher accommodate variation?	Observation
D. Maturity	Extent to which students take personal responsibility for schooling	Are they responsible or irresponsible?	Interview
		How much variation in ability is there?	Interview
		Does the teacher accommodate variation?	Observation
E. Study skills		Are those skills well developed?	Interview
		How much variation in ability is there?	Interview
		Does the teacher accommodate variation?	Observation

Factor Identification	Definition of Factor	Key Questions to Answer	Measurement Method
F. Social skills	Extent of development of students' interpersonal relations skills	Are these skills well developed?	Interview
		How much variation in ability is there?	Interview
		Does the teacher accommodate variation?	Observation
G. Willingness to perform	Students' willingness to demonstrate what they know and are capable of doing	Are they willing or reticent	Interview
		How much variation in ability is there?	Interview
		Does the teacher accommodate variation?	Observation
H. Feedback needs	Strength of student needs for feedback on performance	Are these strong or weak needs?	Interview
		How much variation in ability is there?	Interview
		Does the teacher accommodate variation?	Observation
I. Self assessment skills	Ability to sense own strengths and weaknesses	Are those skills well developed?	Interview
		How much variation in ability is there?	Interview
		Does the teacher accommodate variation?	Observation
J. Sense of fairness	Clarity of sense of when an assessment and/or grade is fair or unfair	How clear is that sense?	Interview
		How much variation in ability is there?	Interview
		Does the teacher accommodate variation?	Observation
K. Reaction to testing	Amount of anxiety at testing time	How anxious are they?	Interview, observation
		How much variation in ability is there?	Interview
		Does the teacher accommodate variation?	Observation
L. Parental expectation	Parent's view of achievement rate of student	Are those expectations clear to the teacher?	Interview
		Are they high or low expectations?	
		Are those expectations important to the teacher?	
		How much variation in ability is there?	Interview
		Does the teacher accommodate variation?	Observation
VIII. ROLE OF POLICY IN CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT			
A. Focus of existing policies	Assessment practices and procedures governed or constrained by current policies	Do current policies focus on:	
		Testing practices? Reporting results? Homework requirements? Class size? Selection for programs? Attendance? Content to be taught?	Policy analysis
B. Origin of existing policies	Level at which the policy is written	Does the teacher know these policies?	Interview
		Do they impact practice? If so, how?	Interview
		What policy makers have written the policies that govern classroom assessment? Federal? State? District? School? Department? Collegial (information agreement with another teacher)?	Policy analysis

CHAPTER 3: PROFILES OF EIGHT CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT ENVIRONMENTS

Having completed the revision of the profile instrument, the researchers then set about the task of reflecting back on field notes and documentation to complete the new profile for each classroom studied. The result is a set of rich and diverse portraits of eight unique and interesting environments. Each is described in this chapter via written description accompanied (followed) by a completed classroom assessment environment profile. Results are then synthesized in Chapter 4.

MATHEMATICS CASE STUDY #1

Background Information

This description of the classroom assessment environment is based on observations of instruction and interviews with the teacher conducted near the end of the 1985-86 school year. Her teaching day includes six class periods of high school algebra instruction, generally for freshman and sophomores. She teaches Algebra I and II, including an honors section of Algebra II. The students are typically good achievers aspiring to college level math. The teacher has over 20 years of experience in high school math instruction, knows what she wants to teach at what pace and is confident that she knows how to teach and assess it.

I. ASSESSMENT PURPOSES

A. Diagnosing individual student needs

A small portion of each class period is given to diagnosing the particular difficulties for individual students. This normally takes place during homework completion time, i.e., during the last five to ten minutes of the class period. The teacher leaves most of the responsibility to the student for initiating these contacts. Because math problems (whether on a test or homework assignment) are precisely diagnostic, the teacher can determine quite easily when performance is lagging through daily contacts with her students.

B. Diagnosing group needs

Two uses of assessment for this purpose were observed. The teacher consistently uses oral questioning to track the learning rate among the students by asking probing questions and waiting for a resonse. In addition, the consistent and regular review of homework reveals potential problems. In one instance, however, the data were undependable. The students scored much higher on a series of quizzes than the teacher thought they would based on her review of recent homework.

C. Assigning grades

All grade information collected via assignments, quizzes and tests are stored on a computer for later averaging and transformation to a grade. Straight percent cutoff scores are used for the transformation: 90 percent correct = A, etc. This is a very visible dimension of the classroom, with cutoffs posted in large letters on the wall.

D. Grouping for instruction within class

There was no evidence of grouping seen during these observations. The teacher relied totally on whole group instruction and seat work (often with individual help).

E. Identifying students for special services

The teacher had no responsibility for such identification. All screening, grouping and placement was done by the guidance counselors. The teacher's view is that she is to teach the students present in each class during each term.

F. Controlling and motivating students

Besides the general control and motivation exerted on students by the assignment-test-grading cycle, there were other uses of assessment as a control mechanism. The teacher used oral questioning as a control tool by calling on inattentive or inconsiderate students and asking follow-up questions until full attention was given and appropriate learning was demonstrated via correct answers. This often took several minutes.

In addition, the teacher occassionally implemented what was termed a "participation grading" interval. I saw this in action only once during observations, while the teacher reports doing this at least twice per week. Essentially, the teacher judges "on task/off task" during this interval, which spans less than a class period. "On task" gets a good grade in the gradebook "to counter some of the low scores if the student needs to." The teacher uses this intermittently and strategically at key instructional times to focus student attention. A scan of student on-task behavior during a participation grade interval every 2 minutes revealed an average of 1.5 students out of 22 (7 percent) off task compared to 5.7 students (26 percent) off task after the interval was terminated. The frequency of student initated questions also increased during the participation time. So in this case, the grade controlled student attention.

G. Evaluating instruction

By and large, the teacher knows what students need to learn, what they are learning and what instruction is needed. The teacher "generally knows what works and what doesn't work" as a result of many years of experience. As a result, the instructional treatment is rarely evaluated and revised on the basis of results.

H. Communicating achievement expectations

In math, nothing communicates expectations more clearly than a set of problems to be solved, according to the teacher. Sample problems are given and reviewed before tests. In some cases, sample items with correct solutions appear right on the test alongside other problems to be solved.

I. Communicating affective expectations

The teacher is very clear about attitude and behavioral expectations during class and uses oral assessment to illustrate and enforce those standards regularly. She calls on inattentive and inconsiderate students, demanding focused attention.

J. Providing test taking experience

The teacher uses "show-work" problems only. Typically, these are not used on large-scale tests. She doesn't care. Her task is to teach math problem solving skills. She feels show work problems are the best way to assess these skills.

II. ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

A. Assessment of achievement (Parts 1 to 15)

The assessment methodology in this math class is dominated by sets of math problems to be solved. This domination extends to homework (for practice and grades), quizzes and tests. The problem sets are either developed by the teacher or are adapted from sets published with the textbook. The teacher knows what items reflect intended outcomes of the text and the tests and quizzes assess those outcomes and are very appropriate. As mentioned above, oral questioning comes into play in this class also. However, the teacher describes this as more of an instructional strategy than an assessment strategy. She seems well aware of its inherent weaknesses, such as problems in obtaining a representative sample of behavior.

The assessments consistently require analysis of the component parts of problems and inferences as to proper solutions. These aspects of assessment match apparent instructional priorities.

B. Assessment of affect (all 10 items)

The only two dimensions of affect assessed are student attention (seriousness of purpose in class) and the extent to which the student is trying (motivation and effort). These are both assessed via observation of students during instruction. Inattention most often takes the form of inconsiderate behavior while the teacher or another student is talking. The offending student is not rebuked or called to attention, but rather becomes the focal point of the teacher's instructional questions.

Motivation and effort are assessed informally via observation of work completion and formally via observation during "participation grade" time. Students seen as not trying receive low grades for it.

C. Assessment of ability

The teacher is very clear about her intent to measure math achievement. Either students can solve the problems or they cannot. She reports that she teachers them on those terms. She relies on no other construct, such as ability. She says she is held accountable for what the students know and don't know.

D. Text assessments

From an assessment point of view, the teacher relied on the textbook for daily homework assignments and for some test items used on tests and quizzes. While complete tests accompanied the text, the teacher did not use the complete test. Rather she selected items and ideas for items from the published tests. She was very clear in her opinions about item formats. She does not like selection-type items (T/F, multiple choice, etc.). She wants students to show work.

III. CRITERIA FOR SELECTING ASSESSMENT METHODS (A-J)

As with other dimensions of assessment, the math teacher has the luxury of being able to be very clear about these criteria. An interview revealed that the teacher is clear about the importance of (a) knowing the purpose for assessment, and (b) matching tests and intruction. These were the keys in developing assessments. The teacher wanted a clear objective index of math problem solving ability that either required a reasonable amount of homework time or could be administered as a test in a class period or less. Problem sets were consciously selected to meet these criteria.

IV. QUALITY OF ASSESSMENTS (A-C)

The assessments are generally of high quality. This is due to the nature of the content, the textbook and accompanying material, and the teacher. Algebra is assessable via clear, straightforward problems. The text provides these in assignments and tests. The teacher knows what she wants and selects problem sets to get it.

The only technical problem noticed was that some of the problem sets may be too brief to adequately sample the domain dependably. The teacher balances coverage with the time available to assess. Often available time is very brief.

The teacher reports deriving little assessment information from oral questioning. So few questions are asked that she knows coverage for any individual is too shallow to be of value. But she sometimes does use recollection of responses as an index of attention and effort.

V. FEEDBACK PROCEDURES

Since observations were done before this descriptive framework was devised, my data are very thin here. Two factors strongly influence the use of feedback in this teacher's classroom. First, the algebra classes attract all (or at least mostly) strong students. A count of class participants revealed that they were mostly male and predominantly Asian.

Observations of student/teacher interaction revealed that the teacher relied on oral and written feedback. Non-verbal feedback was not a factor.

The oral feedback was used during instruction (in class). I saw very little teacher-student interaction outside of class. It was focused on the subject matter covered, unless a behavior problem arose. However, even in this case, the feedback was focused on math skills. That feedback took the form of a specific question which the offender was called upon to answer. Students knew when such a question was being asked and why.

Written feedback included grades and comments regarding incorrect solutions to problem. Correct solutions to similar problems were often used as feedback to lead students to understanding.

VI. DESCRIPTION OF TEACHER AND ASSESSMENT

A. Teacher's background

The teacher has long experience in teaching high school math. Her assessment techniques result from that experience and no other source.

B. Teacher's expenditure of time

Assessment takes up a large share of this teacher's time--often as much as a third of a class period. Because years of development have produced a pool of test items, test planning and development take very little time. Test administration and scoring take up most of the assessment time.

C. Teacher characteristics

The teacher presents material as laid out in the text adopted by the district at a pace that fits the student group. She has very high standards for herself and others but is flexible in how she meets those standards. Her entire mode of assessment (show work problems) reflects a desire to "give partial credit." She has an optimistic set of expectations about her students. She knows what they need to learn and how she can bet teach it.

Evidence of the flexible and experimental manner in which she views assessment is seen in her "creative ideas" for assessment. During my observations, she administered daily quizzes covering the content at hand. At the end of that week, she announced that the sum of the quiz scores would be substituted for the weekly Friday test. She described this as an attempt to disarm test anxiety. Students reacted positively and performed well. Her next experiment would be a take-home weekly test,"just like in college"--a strategy rarely used at the high school.

VII. TEACHER'S PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

The teacher has an optimistic view of students to match her optimistic expectations. In an interview about her students, the most striking comments addressed the great variation in student traits she must address. That variation in prior achievement and motivation manifests itself across individuals within classes, across classes covering the same content, across levels of content (advanced vs. basic) and from year to year. The teacher even senses major changes in student traits as the year unfolds. She contends that this extreme variation is why she allots 10 to 20 minutes per day for individual help for students.

The teacher's strongest comments came in response to questions about parental expectations. Those expectations are very unclear because she is unable to involve parents in the activities of school. This is very important to her and a source of significant frustration.

VIII. ASSESSMENT POLICY

This teacher operates independently of any district or other policy with regard to assessment. She is uninformed regarding assessment policy and is not influenced by it. She knows what assessment is needed and develops needed procedures herself. She is aware of and influenced by district specified policies regarding content to be covered. She adheres to the adopted text and curriculum outline. She also adheres to district policy regarding grade reporting requirements.

Policies and regulations currently on the books that might bear on the issue of classroom assessment in general are neither detailed nor prescriptive. They appear in District Policies and Regulations Manual under Teachers-Duties and Responsibilities in the district's job description of the classroom teacher, and in the high school's Teacher's Handbook. Policies stipulate that assessment of progress will be continuous, focus on performance goals at appropriate levels and reported to parents on a regular basis, as specified by the principal. Final exams and homework are encouraged, particularly at the secondary level. Grades are to reflect student achievement in the subject.

In fact, grading practices represent one area in which the Teacher's Handbook presents detailed and explicit instructions. The meaning of each grade is spelled out. The role of attendance and behavior in grade determination is discussed in detail. Procedures for determining grades are enumerated and teachers are urged to review these with students. And grade reporting requirements are recommended.

PROFILE OF MATHEMATICS CASE #1

I. ASSESSMENT PURPOSES

A. Diagnosing individual student needs	Uninformed					X	Well informed
	Irrelevant					X	Relevant
	Useless					X	Useful
	Not used					X	Used frequently
B. Diagnosing group needs	Uninformed					X	Well informed
	Irrelevant					X	Relevant
	Useless					X	Useful
	Not used				X		Used frequently
C. Assigning grades	Uninformed					X	Well informed
	Irrelevant					X	Relevant
	Useless					X	Useful
	Not used					X	Used frequently
D. Grouping for instruction within class	Uninformed	X					Well informed
	Irrelevant	X					Relevant
	Useless	X					Useful
	Not used	X					Used frequently
E. Identifying students for special services	Uninformed	X					Well informed
	Irrelevant	X					Relevant
	Useless	X					Useful
	Not used	X					Used frequently
F. Controlling and motivating students	Uninformed				X		Well informed
	Irrelevant					X	Relevant
	Useless					X	Useful
	Not used					X	Used frequently
G. Evaluating instruction	Uninformed					X	Well informed
	Irrelevant					X	Relevant
	Useless					X	Useful
	Not used	X					Used frequently
H. Communicating achievement expectations	Uninformed					X	Well informed
	Irrelevant					X	Relevant
	Useless					X	Useful
	Not used					X	Used frequently

I. Communicating affective expectations

Uninformed			X			Well informed
Irrelevant			X			Relevant
Useless			X			Useful
Not used		X				Used frequently

J. Providing test-taking experience

Uninformed					X	Well informed
Irrelevant			X			Relevant
Useless			X			Useful
Not used	X					Used frequently

K. Relative importance of purposes

Given "100 importance points" to distribute across the purposes listed below, how would you distribute those points to reflect the relative importance of the decisions listed?

Diagnosing individual needs	30
Diagnosing group needs	5
Assigning grades	50
Grouping for instruction	0
Identifying students for special services	0
Controlling and motivating	10
Evaluating instruction	0
Communicating achievement expectations	5
Communicating affective expectations	0
Test taking experience	0
	100 points

II. ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

A. Assessment of Achievement

1. Teacher-developed paper and pencil tests and quizzes	Uninformed					X	Well informed
	Inappropriate					X	Appropriate
	Useless					X	Useful
	Not used					X	Used frequently
2. Text-embedded paper and pencil tests and quizzes	Uninformed					X	Well informed
	Inappropriate					X	Appropriate
	Useless					X	Useful
	Not used					X	Used frequently
3. Performance assessments	Uninformed			X			Well informed
	Inappropriate	X					Appropriate
	Useless	X					Useful
	Not used	X					Used frequently
4. Oral questioning strategies	Uninformed			X			Well informed
	Inappropriate					X	Appropriate
	Useless					X	Useful
	Not used					X	Used frequently
5. Standardized tests	Uninformed			X			Well informed
	Inappropriate			X			Appropriate
	Useless			X			Useful
	Not used	X					Used frequently
6. Group assessment methods	Uninformed			X			Well informed
	Inappropriate			X			Appropriate
	Useless			X			Useful
	Not used	X					Used frequently
7. Opinions of other teachers	Uninformed			X			Well informed
	Inappropriate			X			Appropriate
	Useless			X			Useful
	Not used	X					Used frequently
8. Assessment of reasoning skills	Uninformed					X	Well informed
	Inappropriate					X	Appropriate
	Useless					X	Useful
	Not used					X	Used frequently

9. Regular assignments	Uninformed					X	Well informed
	Inappropriate					X	Appropriate
	Useless					X	Useful
	Not used					X	Used frequently

10. Student peer rating	Uninformed			X			Well informed
	Inappropriate			X			Appropriate
	Useless			X			Useful
	Not used	X					Used frequently

11. Student self ratings	Uninformed			X			Well informed
	Inappropriate			X			Appropriate
	Useless			X			Useful
	Not used				X		Used frequently

12. Proportion of all assessments for all purposes that are of various types

Teacher-developed paper and pencil tests	30
Text-embedded paper and pencil tests	30
Performance assessments	0
Oral questions	10
Standardized tests	0
Opinions of other teachers	0
Regular assignments	30
Group assessments	0
Student peer ratings	0
Student self ratings	0
	100%

13. Cognitive levels of questions posed in:

	Study and Discussion Questions	Oral Questions	Tests and Quizzes
Recall			
Analysis	X	X	X
Comparison			
Inference	X	X	X
Evaluation			

14. Strategies for integrating assessment and instruction	Uninformed					X	Well informed
	Inappropriate					X	Appropriate
	Useless					X	Useful
	Not used					X	Used frequently
15. Dealing with cheating	Uninformed	(Not observed)					Well informed
	Inappropriate						Appropriate
	Useless						Useful
	Not used						Used frequently

B. Assessment of Affect

1. Observing individual students	Uninformed				X		Well informed
	Inappropriate				X		Appropriate
	Useless				X		Useful
	Not used					X	Used frequently
2. Observing group interactions	Uninformed			X			Well informed
	Inappropriate	X					Appropriate
	Useless	X					Useful
	Not used	X					Used frequently
3. Using questionnaires	Uninformed	(Not observed)					Well informed
	Inappropriate						Appropriate
	Useless						Useful
	Not used						Used frequently
4. Using interviews (formal and informal)	Uninformed	(Not observed)					Well informed
	Inappropriate						Appropriate
	Useless						Useful
	Not used						Used frequently
5. Opinions of other teachers	Uninformed	(Not observed)					Well informed
	Inappropriate						Appropriate
	Useless						Useful
	Not used						Used frequently
6. Opinions of other students	Uninformed	(Not observed)					Well informed
	Inappropriate						Appropriate
	Useless						Useful
	Not used						Used frequently

7. Opinions of parents

Uninformed	___(Not observed)___	Well informed
Inappropriate	___ ___ ___ ___ ___	Appropriate
Useless	___ ___ ___ ___ ___	Useful
Not used	___ ___ ___ ___ ___	Used frequently

8. Past student records

Uninformed	___(Not observed)___	Well informed
Inappropriate	___ ___ ___ ___ ___	Appropriate
Useless	___ ___ ___ ___ ___	Useful
Not used	___ ___ ___ ___ ___	Used frequently

9. Checklist of affective characteristics measured:

__F__ Seriousness of purpose
__I__ Motivation and effort
_____ Attitude
_____ Learning style
_____ Interests
_____ Values
_____ Preferences
_____ Academic self-concept
_____ Locus of control
_____ Anxiety
_____ Maturity
_____ Social skills
_____ Study skills
_____ Other (specify ______________________________)

Code:
F = formal assessment conducted
I = informal assessment conducted

10. Relative importance of affective assessment methods:

Observing individual students	100
Observing group interactions	_____
Using questionnaires	_____
Using interviews (formal and informal)	_____
Opinions of other teachers	_____
Opinions of other students	_____
Opinions of parents	_____
Past student records	_____
	100%

C. Assessment of Ability

1. Meaning of ability for teacher
Value of this factor for the teacher — Important ___ ___ ___ _X_ ___ Unimportant

Measurement of ability	Measured formally	____
	Measured informally	____
	Not measured	X

Ingredients considered in assessment of ability, if measured:

FACTOR(S) INCLUDED IN ASSESSMENT	MEASURED HOW?
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

2. Check decisions influenced by results (i.e., change with varying levels of ability).

____ Instructional objectives
____ Instructional strategies
____ Grouping for instruction (within class)
____ Methods for measuring achievement
____ Grading standards
____ Students selected for special services
____ Other (specify ________________________________)

D. Text Assessments

Checklist of assessment components provided with text

Available	Used	
____	____	Oral questions for class use
X	X	Homework assignments
____	____	General assessment guidelines for teachers
X	X	Paper and pencil tests (adapted)
____	____	Performance assessments
____	____	Scoring guidelines
____	____	Quality control guidelines
____	____	Other (specify ____________________________)

III. CRITERIA FOR SELECTING ASSESSMENT METHODS

A. Results fit purpose	Uninformed					X	Well informed
	Unimportant					X	Important
	Not used					X	Used frequently
B. Method matches material taught	Uninformed					X	Well informed
	Unimportant					X	Important
	Not used					X	Used frequently
C. Ease of development	Uninformed				X		Well informed
	Unimportant				X		Important
	Not used				X		Used frequently
D. Ease of scoring	Uninformed					X	Well informed
	Unimportant	X					Important
	Not used	X					Used frequently
E. Origin of assessment	Uninformed					X	Well informed
	Unimportant	X					Important
	Not used	X					Used frequently
F. Time required to administer	Uninformed					X	Well informed
	Unimportant					X	Important
	Not used					X	Used frequently
G. Degree of objectivity	Uninformed					X	Well informed
	Unimportant					X	Important
	Not used					X	Used frequently
H. Applicability to measuring thinking skills	Uninformed					X	Well informed
	Unimportant					X	Important
	Not used					X	Used frequently
I. Effective control of cheating	Uninformed					X	Well informed
	Unimportant					X	Important
	Not used	X					Used frequently

J. Relative importance of criteria

Results fit purpose	25
Method matches material taught	40
Ease of development	5
Ease of scoring	0
Origin of assessment	0
Time required to administer	10
Degree of objectivity	10
Applicability to measuring thinking skills	10
Effective control of cheating	0
	100%

IV. QUALITY OF ASSESSMENTS

A. Percent of paper and pencil assessments (teacher-developed or text-embedded) having the following characteristics (need not total 100%):

%	
100	Clear description of assessment specifications
100	Matches content of instruction
100	Matches cognitive levels of instruction
100	Minimizes time required to gather needed information
100	Item format matches desired outcome
100	Items clearly written
Uncertain	Items sample domain
100	Scoring procedures planned
100	Scoring criteria written for essays
100	Clear directions
100	High quality reproduction
100	Test scheduled to minimize distractions

B. Percent of performance assessments having the following characteristics: (Not used)

%	
	Clear description of trait to be measured with levels of proficiency articulated
	Matches intended outcomes of instruction
	Minimizes time required to gather needed information
	Clear performance criteria
	Students aware of criteria
	Thoughtful exercises yield performance samples
	Exercises sample performance domain
	Performance rating planned
	Results match information needs

C. Percent of oral questions having the following characteristics:

%	
10	Sampling methods cover range of achievement levels of students
100	Strategies involve everyone
100	Teacher waits for response
100	Student's response given supportive reaction
100	Questions match cognitive levels of instruction
0	Written performance records maintained

V. FEEDBACK PROCEDURES

A. For oral and nonverbal feedback

Percent of feedback delivered to students who are:

%
90 Strong (vs. weak)
90 Correct (vs. incorrect)
80 Male (vs. female)

Percent of feedback having the following characteristics:

%
100 Delivered in class (vs. out of class)
100 Oral (vs. nonverbal)
90 Public (vs. private)
100 Fair (vs. unfair)
100 Focused on achievement (vs. affect)
100 Germane (vs. irrelevant)
100 Immediate (vs. delayed)
50 Positive (vs. negative)

B. For written feedback

Percent of feedback delivered to students who are:

%
90 Strong (vs. weak)
Variable Correct (vs. incorrect)
80 Male (vs. female)

Percent of feedback having the following characteristics:

%
50 Comment (vs. symbol)
50 Positive (vs. negative)
100 Fair (vs. unfair)
100 Germane (vs. irrelevant)
100 Focused on achievement (vs. affect)

Uses samples of performance as feedback — Never ___ ___ ___ X ___ Frequently

Uses public achievement chart as feedback — Never X ___ ___ ___ ___ Frequently

VI. DESCRIPTION OF TEACHER AND ASSESSMENT

A. Teacher's background

1. Teacher experience, number of years:
21 Overall
21 At grade level
Unknown In school
21 With content

2. Relative contributions of various sources to teacher's knowledge of assessment methodology

%
___ Teacher preparation training
___ Inservice training
___ Ideas and suggestions of colleagues
___ Professional literature
___ Teacher's guide to textbooks
100 Own experience in classroom
___ Other (Sepcify ______________________________)
100%

B. Teacher's expenditure of time

1. Proportion of time spent in teaching activities
(No information)

%
10 Planning
20 Teaching (one on one)
40 Teaching (group)
30 Assessing (see list below)
___ Other (specify ______________________________)
100%

2. Proportion of time spent in assessment activities (paper and pencil, performance assessment, oral, assignments)
(No information)

%
5 Reviewing and selecting assessments
10 Developing own assessments
35 Administering
30 Scoring and recording
20 Providing feedback
0 Evaluating quality
100%

C. Teacher characteristics

Role in the classroom — Curriculum maker and presenter ___ ___ ___ ___ X Servant of policy delivering required content

Expectations of professional self	Expects little					X	Expects a great deal
Structure needs	Rigid			X			Flexible
View of high quality performance	Correctness demanded				X		Degrees of quality eval.
Stereotypic view of students	None		X				Expressed often
Attends to exceptional student	Never					X	Frequently
Sense of performance norms	Unclear					X	Very clear
Orientation to experimentation	No risks					X	Risk taker
Orientation to cheating	No concern		X				Major concern
Amount of cheating	None		(Not observed)				A great deal
Value of promptness; importance of timely work completion	Unimportant		X				Important
Interpersonal environment of the classroom regarding assessment:							
Cooperative	None			X			Frequent
Competitive	None			X			Frequent

Attributions for reasons of student success/failure:

50 Due to student
50 Due to teacher
100%

Basis for grading students:

____ Sense of ability
100 Demonstrated achievement
100%

Interpretation of assessment:

____ Norm-referenced
100 Criterion-referenced
100%

VII. TEACHER'S PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

A. Ability to learn	Low			(Not a factor			High
	No variation			for this			Great deal
	Variation ignored			teacher)			Addressed
B. Willingness to learn	Low				X		High
	No variation					X	Great deal
	Variation ignored					X	Addressed
C. Rate of achievement	Low			X			High
	Decreasing			X			Increasing
	No variation				X		Great deal
	Variation ignored				X		Addressed
D. Maturity	Irresponsible				X		Responsible
	No variation				X		Great deal
	Variation ignored			X			Addressed
E. Study skills	Undeveloped			X			Developed
	No variation				X		Great deal
	Variation ignored			X			Addressed
F. Social skills	Undeveloped				X		Developed
	No variation				X		Great deal
	Variation ignored			X			Addressed
G. Willingness to perform	Reticent				X		Willing
	No variation					X	Great deal
	Variation ignored					X	Addressed
H. Feedback needs	Weak					X	Strong
	No variation		X				Great deal
	Variation ignored					X	Addressed
I. Self-assessment skills	Undeveloped	X					Developed
	No variation	X					Great deal
	Variation ignored	X					Addressed

J. Sense of fairness	Unclear		X				Clear
	No variation		X				Great deal
	Variation ignored		X				Addressed
K. Reaction to testing	Tranquil				X		Anxious
	No variation		X				Great deal
	Variation ignored		X				Addressed
L. Parental expectations	Unclear	X					Clear
	Low			X			High
	Unimportant				X		Important
	No variation					X	Great deal
	Variation ignored	X					Addressed

VIII. ASSESSMENT POLICY
(See attached table)

VIII. What policies influence classroom assessment?

ORIGINS OF POLICY

FOCUS OF POLICY

	Federal	State	District	School	Department	Collegial
Testing	A. Does a standard exist? B. Does teacher know standard? C. Does it impact practice? How?	A. B. C.	A. yes B. yes C. yes		A. B. C.	A. B. C.
Reporting	A. B. C.		A. yes B. yes C. yes	A. B. C.	A. B. C.	
Homework			A. yes B. no C. no	A. B. C.	A. B. C.	A. B. C.
Class Size			A. yes B. no C. no			
Selection Spec. Prog. and/or Recognition	A. B. C.	A. B. C.	A. yes B. no C. no			
Attendance			A. yes B. no C. no			A. B. C.
Content to Be Taught (Inc. Text Selection)			A. yes B. yes C. yes	A. B. C.	A. B. C.	A. B. C.

MATHEMATICS CASE STUDY #2

Background Information

The study of the classroom assessment environment of this high school math teacher spanned one week and involved observations and interviews near the end of the 1985-86 school year. The teacher's class schedule begins at 8:20 am with a planning period, followed by two periods of second year algebra and one period of senior math. Following lunch, the teacher meets one period of calculus, a period of first year algebra and finishes the day with another senior math class.

The algebra and calculus classes contain good students in a college preparation math sequence. Senior math students are simply trying to complete one final math unit for graduation. This class covers basic math and students are not motivated. A vast majority of students are male and about half of the algebra students are of oriental heritage.

The teacher is a veteran of over 30 years of service--most of which were spent at the urban technical high school where he now teaches. As a result of this long tenure on the job the teacher holds very strong values about students, their motivation and learning. He also employs a set of assessment and instructional procedures that he feels are tried and proven.

By way of introduction, the teacher provides a clear and concise portrait of many of the key dimensions of his assessment environment in the following quotation. This type of message is given to each student in writing at the beginning of each term and is discussed in detail. The description varies only slightly depending on the course:

> Assignments are handed out on sheets for about 1/2 year at a time, to account for absence, outdoor school, vacation, etc.
>
> No assignments will be given on Friday as long as we can maintain my schedule.
>
> No tests will be given on Friday or Monday if at all possible.
>
> Grades will come mainly from tests scores and approximately 5 percent from daily work. Grades will suffer greatly if daily work is not in and on time. Daily work is handed in by leaving it on my desk sometime during the period or as you leave the class at the end of the period. Daily work may be handed in anytime in a two day time interval and be acceptable. Each person must correct their own daily paper before handing in. Problems from the days lesson are to be put on the board every day (except review days). The first 10 minutes of class time is reserved for the students putting these problems on the board and if a student cannot do his or her problem for the board they may get help from me in this 10 minutes to enable them to do their part. If a student does not put up their problem they get a 0 in the gradebook, more than two of these after the first grading period will result in a lowering of the grade. Problems are on the

board to enable students to correct their work and answers. No student will be required to put more than two problems on the board in any one day. When I ask for questions on the work, the student should ask about any problem you do not agree with the method or the answer that is on the board. If you ask for a problem not on the board that is assigned you have the responsibility of doing this problem on the board within 5 minutes or a 0 can be given.

Grades are (100 to 90)% is an A, (89 to 80)% is a B, (79 to 65)% is a C, (64 to 50)% is a D, belkow 50% is an F on the tests. If daily work is in then (100 to 85)% is an A, (84 to 75)% is a B, (74 to 50)% is an earned C, I will also give a C to any student who gets all the daily work in, acceptable and on time and has at least a 35% average and creates no problems for the class. You can get a D or F if the daily work is not in. D comes when a student has a passing average 50% or better and too many missing daily papers, (more than 4) or all the daily papers in. F come if below a passing average and daily papers missing. When absent 2 or more days you have twice the time you are absent to makeup the work missed because of absence.

The first grading period I am lenient and will give a "C" to almost anyone with an average of 30% or more unless a B or better is earned but daily work missing must be made up before the end of the second grade period to receive any grade above a D.

The first grading period average will not alter the second periods grade unless it will raise that grade, but daily work will, third periods grade is averaged with the fourth periods grade for the semester grade.

If you are having trouble of any kind please come see me and let me know what it is so we can adjust to make it possible for you to keep up. Just don't fail by doing nothing. As a teacher I'm here to help you to be successful not to fail you or make your life miserable. I'll do almost anything to help you to be successful, let me know what your trouble is. It may be me, I hope not but we will try to work out the problem if you let me know. if we can't then take the problem to the counselors, then the vice-principal, and etc.

Every student is expected to bring his/her own tools to class (pencil, paper, book, etc.) every day.

All work must be done in pencil, NO INK.

There will be no laughing at any question or student asking a question in class.

Each student should always check me by checking your record kept in my gradebook to be sure my record matches yours at to daily work handed in. You should do it at least at midterm and one week before grades are to be given for the term so we can work out the difference if we do not agree.

This passage illustrates the focus of this teacher's priorities for classroom assessment.

I. ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES (A-J)

Each class period is structured to provide students with an opportunity to receive individual help with their development of math skills. Upon arrival in the classroom, each student takes responsibility for placing one home work problem on the board. As this is being done any student can ask for help with any of the problems and is given individual attention. It is also common for students to tell each other when board work is wrong while it is being written on the board and to suggest revisions. When all work is on the board, the instructor goes over each making corrections where needed and discussing details as necessary. During this checking process, each student in the class corrects her or his own homework paper before handing it in. Using this homework review process daily, the teacher is able to very carefully diagnose individual student and group needs.

While assignments are not graded per se (see Section V. on Feedback), they must be completed or the final grade will suffer. In this way, he controls and motivates students to do the work and clearly communicates achievement expectations. He also relies on assignments and tests (including practice tests) to communicate achievement expectations.

As was reflected in the passage presented in the introduction, grades and grading practices tend to drive the entire evaluation system. Students receive 3 to 4 tests per grading period and in the teacher's words, "must do the daily work consciously to score well on tests." Assignments are for practice; tests are for grading.

He does not use assessment to evaluate instruction. He sees no benefit in evaluation, as he regards his instructional methods as tried and proven. Besides, he recounts instances early in his career when, due to poor student performance, he revised instruction, retaught material and retested. Student performance did not improve, so he gave up on evaluation and revision.

While the teacher does not intend to use classroom tests as practice for the large-scale standardized tests, he does try to use test items and formats (described below) like those students will take in college.

II. ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

A. Assessment of achievement (Part 1 to 15)

The teacher relies completely on one and only one method for assessing math achievement: problem sets which students must solve, showing all work. These sets make up all homework assignments, tests and quizzes. Student responses are evaluated in terms of their ability to complete all steps in reaching the correct answer. The correct answer itself represents a small part of the student's score for each problem. Partial credit is always possible. As such, all assessments tap student reasoning skills. Traditional true/false and multiple-choice items have been rejected by the teacher because he does not want to emphasize correct answers only.

Problems used in daily assignments come from the textbook or are prepared by the teacher. All test and quiz items are prepared by the teacher. He is an experienced test writer, having played a key role in the past in the development of district wide math tests. He keeps a carefully orgranized file of past tests, which serve as a bank of items for use on future tests. The file includes parallel forms of tests for use in case of a need for retesting.

Student self-evaluation is another key dimension of this classroom assessment environment. This takes two forms. First, each student must check and correct his or her own daily work before handing it in. In addition, however, and perhaps more importantly, the teacher consistently asks students to evaluate their own understanding during instruction. If students report a lack of understanding, he reviews the material again. If they do not, he goes on. A common alternative to this approach is for a teacher to ask students questions during instruction to sample student learning. This teacher asks the questions, but rarely waits for students to respond. He almost invariably answers the questions himself.

Issues of teacher judgment rarely play a role in assessments of student achievement, as in performance assessment. All problems have correct solutions and those solutions are discovered and carried out properly or they are not. The solutions speak for themselves in evaluating achievement.

Standardized tests do play a role in classroom assessment if the district happens to have such a test scheduled during a given grading period. But this is rare. When it occurs, the teacher sets aside class time for the test and administers the tests according to prescribed instructions. He encourages students to take it seriously by weighting the test the same as a unit test during that period (of which there are typically four).

It is worthy of note, incidentally, that, each term, the student has the right to choose one unit test score to be dropped from the record. This test is not figured into the grade. The rationale given for this practice is that everyone has a bad day.

The only mention made of student peer assessment is the occassional use of Algebra II students to grade Algebra I papers.

B. Assessment of affect (1 to 10)

Assessment of affect in this environment is not a complex enterprise either in terms of the traits measured or the measurement strategies used. Beyond the measurement of student achievement, the only other trait measured by this teacher is student motivation--seriousness of purpose. This assessment is based almost completely on the examination of student completion of daily assignments.

Two dimensions of homework completion are considered in this measurement. First, as was reflected in the introduction, students are expected to complete the work in a timely manner. Those who do not are judged not to have been trying. Second, the teacher selects a sample of daily assignments to examine very carefully. Each week each student received detailed feedback on one paper. Based on this careful analysis, the teacher infers whether the student is being consciencious. Those who are benefit at grading time, especially if they are on the borderline between grades.

Two other pieces of evidence contribute to this measurement of seriousness of purpose and effort. One is the daily work placed on the board. Students who fail to fulfill this responsibility (automatically) receive a zero in the gradebook for that day. Second, the teacher works with students individually at the beginning of the class period and uses these informal interactions to assess the student's motivation and effort.

While the measurement methodology in use in this context seems solid, there is one danger that became apparent during observations of and interviews with the teacher. This person is extremely upset about what he perceives to be a major decline in student motivation over the years. This may have left him on the verge of being cynical about his students' wellingness to work. This cynicism is apparent in interactions with students, some of which appear very aggressive and hostile. The danger is that this cynicism will serve as a biasing filter through which the teacher in effect will misinterpret student motivation and inappropriately penalize a serious student. I can only label this a danger, because in fact, I saw no specific instances of such misinterpretation inappropriately influencing a grade.

C. Assessment of ability

The teacher does not think about or measure student ability independent of demonstrated math achievement. He assumes that students assigned to his classes by the guidance counselors can do the work. For him, the issue is whether or not they are willing to do so.

D. Text assessments

Homework problem sets often come from the text in all classes. Tests are also offered by text publishers and occassionally the teacher may adapt a problem for use on one of his tests. But, by and large, he makes up his own tests.

II. CRITERIA FOR SELECTING ASSESSMENT METHODS (A TO J)

The teacher is very clear about assessment purposes, measurement methods and the reasons for using the methods he has adapted. He spends a good deal of time developing assessments and evaluating student performance. Convenience is not an issue. His instructional objectives are clear and he uses problem sets because they match his objectives. The origin of assessments is important--he wants to develop them himself to ensure match.

He wants to measure problem solving (thinking) skill as objectively as possible within a reasonable time limit (for homework and tests). While the assessment method he uses in effect minimizes the possibility that students might cheat, he doesn't regard that as an issue. In short, he measures as he does for most of the right reasons.

IV. QUALITY OF ASSESSMENTS

A. Paper and pencil assessments

The paper and pencil assessment procedures are of high quality. All criteria of good assessment appear to be met. Assessments are valid, reliable, understood by students and happen within the resource limits of the classroom.

B. Performance assessments

Regarding performance assessments, under heading I.A., I specified that this method is *not* used to measure student *achievement*. However, under I.B., I also specified that observations and teacher judgments (performance assessments) do play a major role in the measurement of student affect--specifically student motivation and effort. These assessments play a role in final decisions about student grades. Therefore, like measures of achievement, they must meet certain standards of quality if they are to lead to sound decision making.

In this case, most of the standards are met. He wants students to do daily work because he feels this practice will aid learning. Consequently, in his system, homework completed represents the operational definition of motivation. The underlying continuum is this: those who complete the work are trying and are motivated; those who do not are not. The exercises are homework assignments. There are many of them. They appear valid. The rating procedures are reflected in a checklist of work done so records are carefully maintained. Thus, these procedures are objective and apparently dependable. Students know what is expected and how performance will be measured. This appears to be sold performance assessment.

C. Oral questions

This form of assessment is not managed as effectively as are the other two. The range of questions asked during instruction is quite narrow and the teacher rarely waits for a student response. Further, no apparent record of student performance is kept.

Fortunately, however, the impact of these problems is minimal because this form of assessment plays a minor role. It does not bear on individual student decisions (i.e., diagnosis or grading) and rarely influences group decisions.

Questions are often rhetorical and are used more as instructional than assessment devises. In fact, the teacher reports that he does not consider this a valid assessment method because often students just will not answer--whether they know the answer or not. He sees this an attitude problem which interferes with assessment.

Note: Evidence of Overall Quality: The one type of evidence cited most often by the teacher as testimony to the appropriateness and quality of his assessment is the fact that occasionally a student will return from college and thank him for maintaining a demanding classroom assessment environment.

V. FEEDBACK PROCEDURES

A. Oral and nonverbal feedback

Oral feedback is delivered most frequently during the evaluation of boardwork at the beginning of class. As such it is corrective in nature. Correct problem solutions receive little attention. Students who make mistakes receive the attention. These tend to be weaker students. Incidentally this feedback goes most often to males because they represent such a high percentage of the class.

Key characteristics of this oral feedback are that it is aggressively delivered in class and is quite public, verbal and clearly focused. When it is not clearly focused on demonstrated work, it contains inferences about student motivation and may be unfair. In one notable instance, a student whom the teacher had yet to identify was publicly labeled "stupid or a liar" based on board work. While such feedback was very rare, when it occurred it left an indelible mark of aggressive cynicism on the assessment environment.

B. Written feedback

Written feedback always reflected a careful analysis of student work, pointing out problems when necessary. It too was corrective and tended to go to the weak points in student performance. Therefore, it was more negative than positive, but was always highly focused on student math work. In addition, written feedback was delivered in a private manner on student papers--whether test or assignment.

VI. THE TEACHER AND ASSESSMENT

This is a very experienced teacher who has taught himself to assess student performance through years of classroom experiences. While colleagues may have contributed some to that development, he gives them only minor credit. He devotes a great deal of time to assessment. Instruction may claim 20 of the 50 class minutes. Much of the rest goes to evaluating board work and providing needed feedback as well as to providing students with in-class practice time during which he can provide help. When quiz and test time is considered too, assessment appears dominant. His out of class time is devoted almost completely to the careful evaluation of student paper. He needs little time for planning and preparation, as he knows his objectives inside out and has instructional treatments clearly articulated. His time goes to checking papers in, keeping thorough records and carefully analyzing 10 student papers per class per day.

In interviews, he describes himself as a very independent professional striving for excellence. However, he is doubtful if his colleagues or student are striving for the same goal and that frustrates him. As mentioned previously, he is cynical about student attitudes toward school and teachers and attributes the decline in this area to changing family patterns and increasing problems at home.

Even so, he is clear about his expectations and standards and strives to help students meet them. Most males could be very successful in math "if they would just work hard at it," in his opinion.

VII. TEACHER'S PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS (A TO L)

When asked to profile his perceptions of the characteristics of his students, this teacher spontaneously provided two completely distinct profiles. One described student characteristics averaged across all of his classes. That profile appears on the summary profile. It reflects a somewhat optimistic, positive view of his students. They are able to learn, are achieving, etc. Their motivation, maturity, etc. are somewhat lacking. And he reports that there is much variation in these traits across students. Many of these perception have been discussed above. So these ratings provide some evidence of the dependability of the profile of this teacher's classroom assessment environment.

But the second profle reflects perceptions not addressed up to this point. That profile reflects the teacher's opinion of student in senior math classes only. These are students who are assigned to this class to fulfill one last math requirement for graduation. At the time of my observations, these students were within a few weeks of graduation. The teacher profiled these students at the lowest possible end of all scales (ability, willingness, achievement, maturity, etc.) and reported absolutely no variation in these negative traits across all students in these classes.

As we discussed these students it became apparent that they (students in two of his six classes) were the cause of the cynical perceptions of the student body as a whole. In fact, he perceives fundamental differences in key student traits across different classes. In practice, however, his verbal interchanges with students, assessment methods and instructional methods do not reflect those differences. All classes and students are treated exactly alike. Speculation as to what differences in treatment might be justified are beyond the scope of this case report. The key finding here is that a major discrepancy in student characteristics is not reflected in different classroom assessment environments across classes.

VIII. ASSESSMENT POLICY

As a general rule, beyond requirements for content to be covered and for reporting achievement information, this teacher is unaware of and does not consciously adhere to any policies as governing student assessment. He sees himself as responsible for devising and using assessment procedures that fit his particular context.

In fact, the policies bearing on this issue are district policies. The one exception to this is the state requirement that students take a specified number of units of math. This gives rise to the senior math classes this teacher covers. But this policy does not influence the assessment processes per se, which are the same in senior math as in all other classes.

There are a number of district policies that could play some role in determining the nature of the assessment in this classroom. One is district testing policy. This could take up class time and place a premium on large-scale standardized testing. In fact, it rarely does. Another is achievement reporting requirements. Grades are to be reported four times per year, with semester grades going into the permanent record. The teacher complies with this policy.

There is a policy on the books regarding homework. But the teacher is influenced by his own standards in this regard. Class size is a matter of policy. But in math, especially the algebra classes, the student count is well below maximums. But even if the classes were full, the assessment process would not change. Policy with regard to attendance holds that students must have the opportunity to make up work. This teacher has specific procedures in place to allow this to happen. And finally, the district specific content to be covered by selecting the text to be used in each course. The teacher adheres to the text as the curriculum outline and assesses accordingly.

I was able to uncover no school, department or collegial policies that spoke to assessment issues.

PROFILE OF MATHEMATICS CASE #2

I. ASSESSMENT PURPOSES

A. Diagnosing individual student needs	Uninformed					X	Well informed
	Irrelevant					X	Relevant
	Useless					X	Useful
	Not used					X	Used frequently
B. Diagnosing group needs	Uninformed					X	Well informed
	Irrelevant					X	Relevant
	Useless					X	Useful
	Not used					X	Used frequently
C. Assigning grades	Uninformed				X		Well informed
	Irrelevant					X	Relevant
	Useless					X	Useful
	Not used					X	Used frequently
D. Grouping for instruction within class	Uninformed			X			Well informed
	Irrelevant					X	Relevant
	Useless					X	Useful
	Not used	X					Used frequently
E. Identifying students for special services	Uninformed	X					Well informed
	Irrelevant	X					Relevant
	Useless	X					Useful
	Not used	X					Used frequently
F. Controlling and motivating students	Uninformed					X	Well informed
	Irrelevant					X	Relevant
	Useless					X	Useful
	Not used					X	Used frequently
G. Evaluating instruction	Uninformed			X			Well informed
	Irrelevant					X	Relevant
	Useless					X	Useful
	Not used	X					Used frequently
H. Communicating achievement expectations	Uninformed					X	Well informed
	Irrelevant					X	Relevant
	Useless					X	Useful
	Not used					X	Used frequently

I. Communicating affective expectations	Uninformed	X					Well informed
	Irrelevant			X			Relevant
	Useless			X			Useful
	Not used	X					Used frequently
J. Providing test-taking experience	Uninformed					X	Well informed
	Irrelevant					X	Relevant
	Useless					X	Useful
	Not used					X	Used frequently

K. Relative importance of purposes

Given "100 importance points" to distribute across the purposes listed below, how would you distribute those points to reflect the relative importance of the decisions listed?

Diagnosing individual needs	20
Diagnosing group needs	10
Assigning grades	40
Grouping for instruction	0
Identifying students for special services	0
Controlling and motivating	10
Evaluating instruction	0
Communicating achievement expectations	10
Communicating affective expectations	0
Test taking experience	10
	100 points

II. ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

A. Assessment of Achievement

1. Teacher-developed paper and pencil tests and quizzes	Uninformed					X	Well informed
	Inappropriate					X	Appropriate
	Useless					X	Useful
	Not used					X	Used frequently
2. Text-embedded paper and pencil tests and quizzes	Uninformed					X	Well informed
	Inappropriate					X	Appropriate
	Useless					X	Useful
	Not used			X			Used frequently
3. Performance assessments	Uninformed			X			Well informed
	Inappropriate			X			Appropriate
	Useless			X			Useful
	Not used	X					Used frequently
4. Oral questioning strategies	Uninformed		X				Well informed
	Inappropriate					X	Appropriate
	Useless					X	Useful
	Not used		X				Used frequently
5. Standardized tests	Uninformed					X	Well informed
	Inappropriate			X			Appropriate
	Useless			X			Useful
	Not used			X			Used frequently
6. Group assessment methods	Uninformed			X			Well informed
	Inappropriate			X			Appropriate
	Useless			X			Useful
	Not used	X					Used frequently
7. Opinions of other teachers	Uninformed			X			Well informed
	Inappropriate			X			Appropriate
	Useless			X			Useful
	Not used	X					Used frequently
8. Assessment of reasoning skills	Uninformed					X	Well informed
	Inappropriate					X	Appropriate
	Useless					X	Useful
	Not used					X	Used frequently

9. Regular assignments

Uninformed					X	Well informed
Inappropriate					X	Appropriate
Useless					X	Useful
Not used					X	Used frequently

10. Student peer rating

Uninformed			X			Well informed
Inappropriate			X			Appropriate
Useless			X			Useful
Not used		X				Used frequently

11. Student self ratings

Uninformed				X		Well informed
Inappropriate					X	Appropriate
Useless					X	Useful
Not used					X	Used frequently

12. Proportion of all assessments for all purposes that are of various types

Teacher-developed paper and pencil tests	50
Text-embedded paper and pencil tests	0
Performance assessments	0
Oral questions	0
Standardized tests	0
Opinions of other teachers	0
Regular assignments	30
Group assessments	0
Student peer ratings	0
Student self ratings	20
	100%

13. Cognitive levels of questions posed in:

	Study and Discussion Questions	Oral Questions	Tests and Quizzes
Recall			
Analysis			
Comparison			
Inference	100%	100%	100%
Evaluation			

14. Strategies for integrating assessment and instruction	Uninformed					X	Well informed
	Inappropriate					X	Appropriate
	Useless					X	Useful
	Not used					X	Used frequently
15. Dealing with cheating	Uninformed			Not observed			Well informed
	Inappropriate						Appropriate
	Useless						Useful
	Not used						Used frequently

B. Assessment of Affect

1. Observing individual students	Uninformed			X			Well informed
	Inappropriate					X	Appropriate
	Useless					X	Useful
	Not used					X	Used frequently
2. Observing group interactions	Uninformed			No evidence			Well informed
	Inappropriate			X			Appropriate
	Useless			X			Useful
	Not used	X					Used frequently
3. Using questionnaires	Uninformed			No evidence			Well informed
	Inappropriate			X			Appropriate
	Useless			X			Useful
	Not used	X					Used frequently
4. Using interviews (formal and informal)	Uninformed				X		Well informed
	Inappropriate				X		Appropriate
	Useless				X		Useful
	Not used			X			Used frequently
5. Opinions of other teachers	Uninformed			No evidence			Well informed
	Inappropriate			X			Appropriate
	Useless			X			Useful
	Not used	X					Used frequently
6. Opinions of other students	Uninformed			No evidence			Well informed
	Inappropriate			X			Appropriate
	Useless			X			Useful
	Not used	X					Used frequently

7. Opinions of parents

Uninformed			X			Well informed
Inappropriate			X			Appropriate
Useless	X					Useful
Not used	X					Used frequently

8. Past student records

Uninformed					X	Well informed
Inappropriate					X	Appropriate
Useless					X	Useful
Not used	X					Used frequently

9. Checklist of affective characteristics measured:

F	Seriousness of purpose
F	Motivation and effort
I	Attitude
	Learning style
	Interests
	Values
	Preferences
	Academic self-concept
	Locus of control
	Anxiety
	Maturity
	Social skills
	Study skills
	Other (specify ________________________________)

Code:
F = formal assessment conducted
I = informal assessment conducted

10. Relative importance of affective assessment methods:

Observing individual students	95
Observing group interactions	0
Using questionnaires	0
Using interviews (formal and informal)	5
Opinions of other teachers	0
Opinions of other students	0
Opinions of parents	0
Past student records	0
	100%

C. Assessment of Ability

1. Meaning of ability for teacher
Value of this factor
for the teacher

Important					X	Unimportant

Measurement of ability	Measured formally	____
	Measured informally	____
	Not measured	_X_

Ingredients considered in assessment of ability, if measured:

FACTOR(S) INCLUDED IN ASSESSMENT	MEASURED HOW?
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

2. Check decisions influenced by results (i.e., change with varying levels of ability).

____ Instructional objectives
____ Instructional strategies
____ Grouping for instruction (within class)
____ Methods for measuring achievement
____ Grading standards
____ Students selected for special services
____ Other (specify ______________________________)

D. Text Assessments

Checklist of assessment components provided with text

Available	Used	
____	____	Oral questions for class use
_X_	_X_	Homework assignments
____	____	General assessment guidelines for teachers
_X_	____	Paper and pencil tests
____	____	Performance assessments
____	____	Scoring guidelines
____	____	Quality control guidelines
____	____	Other (specify ______________________________)

III. CRITERIA FOR SELECTING ASSESSMENT METHODS

A. Results fit purpose	Uninformed					X	Well informed
	Unimportant					X	Important
	Not used					X	Used frequently
B. Method matches material taught	Uninformed					X	Well informed
	Unimportant					X	Important
	Not used					X	Used frequently
C. Ease of development	Uninformed					X	Well informed
	Unimportant	X					Important
	Not used	X					Used frequently
D. Ease of scoring	Uninformed					X	Well informed
	Unimportant	X					Important
	Not used	X					Used frequently
E. Origin of assessment	Uninformed					X	Well informed
	Unimportant					X	Important
	Not used					X	Used frequently
F. Time required to administer	Uninformed					X	Well informed
	Unimportant					X	Important
	Not used					X	Used frequently
G. Degree of objectivity	Uninformed					X	Well informed
	Unimportant					X	Important
	Not used					X	Used frequently
H. Applicability to measuring thinking skills	Uninformed					X	Well informed
	Unimportant					X	Important
	Not used					X	Used frequently
I. Effective control of cheating	Uninformed					X	Well informed
	Unimportant		X				Important
	Not used		X				Used frequently

J. Relative importance of criteria

Results fit purpose	10
Method matches material taught	30
Ease of development	0
Ease of scoring	0
Origin of assessment	10
Time required to administer	10
Degree of objectivity	10
Applicability to measuring thinking skills	30
Effective control of cheating	0
	100%

IV. QUALITY OF ASSESSMENTS

A. Percent of paper and pencil assessments (teacher-developed or text-embedded) having the following characteristics (need not total 100%):

%	
100	Clear description of assessment specifications
100	Matches content of instruction
100	Matches cognitive levels of instruction
100	Minimizes time required to gather needed information
100	Item format matches desired outcome
100	Items clearly written
100	Items sample domain
100	Scoring procedures planned
	Scoring criteria written for essays
100	Clear directions
100	High quality reproduction
100	Test scheduled to minimize distractions

B. Percent of performance assessments* having the following characteristics:

%	
Unclear	Clear description of trait to be measured with levels of proficiency articulated
100	Matches intended outcomes of instruction
100	Minimizes time required to gather needed information
100	Clear performance criteria
100	Students aware of criteria
100	Thoughtful exercises yield performance samples
100	Exercises sample performance domain
100	Performance rating planned
100	Results match information needs

*Used for affective assessment only

C. Percent of oral questions having the following characteristics:

%	
Uncertain	Sampling methods cover range of achievement levels of students
0	Strategies involve everyone
0	Teacher waits for response
50	Student's response given supportive reaction
100	Questions match cognitive levels of instruction
0	Written performance records maintained

V. FEEDBACK PROCEDURES

A. For oral and nonverbal feedback

Percent of feedback delivered to students who are:

%	
75	Strong (vs. weak)
25	Correct (vs. incorrect)
75	Male (vs. female) (only because males dominate the enrollment)

Percent of feedback having the following characteristics:

%	
100	Delivered in class (vs. out of class)
90	Oral (vs. nonverbal)
70	Public (vs. private)
95	Fair (vs. unfair)
100	Focused on achievement (vs. affect)
100	Germane (vs. irrelevant)
100	Immediate (vs. delayed)
50	Positive (vs. negative)

B. For written feedback

Percent of feedback delivered to students who are:

%	
25	Strong (vs. weak)
25	Correct (vs. incorrect)
75	Male (vs. female)

Percent of feedback having the following characteristics:

%	
100	Comment (vs. symbol)
25	Positive (vs. negative)
100	Fair (vs. unfair)
100	Germane (vs. irrelevant)
100	Focused on achievement (vs. affect)

Uses samples of performance as feedback — Never ___ _X_ ___ ___ ___ Frequently

Uses public achievement chart as feedback — Never _X_ ___ ___ ___ ___ Frequently

VI. DESCRIPTION OF TEACHER AND ASSESSMENT

A. Teacher's background

1. Teacher experience, number of years:

33	Overall
33	At grade level
33	In school
33	With content

2. Relative contributions of various sources to teacher's knowledge of assessment methodology

%	
0	Teacher preparation training
0	Inservice training
10	Ideas and suggestions of colleagues
0	Professional literature
0	Teacher's guide to textbooks
90	Own experience in classroom
100%	

B. Teacher's expenditure of time

1. Proportion of time spent in teaching activities

%	
5	Planning
10	Teaching (one on one)
40	Teaching (group)
40	Assessing (see list below)
5	Other (specify: Supervising student practice)
100%	

2. Proportion of time spent in assessment activities (paper and pencil, performance assessment, oral, assignments)

%	
0	Reviewing and selecting assessments
10	Developing own assessments
20	Administering
60	Scoring and recording
10	Providing feedback
0	Evaluating quality
100%	

C. Teacher characteristics

Role in the classroom — Curriculum maker and presenter X ___ ___ ___ ___ Servant of policy delivering required content

Expectations of professional self	Expects little					X	Expects a great deal
Structure needs	Rigid	X					Flexible
View of high quality performance	Correctness demanded					X	Degrees of quality eval.
Stereotypic view of students	None					X	Expresred often
Attends to exceptional student	Never					X	Frequently
Sense of performance norms	Unclear					X	Very clear
Orientation to experimentation	No risks	X					Risk taker
Orientation to cheating	No concern	X					Major concern
Amount of cheating	None			Unknown			A great deal
Value of promptness; importance of timely work completion	Unimportant				X		Important
Interpersonal environment of the classroom regarding assessment:							
Cooperative	None					X	Frequent
Competitive	None	X					Frequent

Attributions for reasons of student success/failure:

100 Due to student
____ Due to teacher
100%

Basis for grading students:

____ Sense of ability
100 Demonstrated achievement
100%

Interpretation of assessment:

____ Norm-referenced
100 Criterion-referenced
100%

VII. TEACHER'S PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

A. Ability to learn	Low		(Not	a	factor		High
	No variation			for	this		Great deal
	Variation ignored			teacher)			Addressed
B. Willingness to learn	Low			X			High
	No variation				X		Great deal
	Variation ignored			X			Addressed
C. Rate of achievement	Low			X			High
	Decreasing				X		Increasing
	No variation				X		Great deal
	Variation ignored				X		Addressed
D. Maturity	Irresponsible		X				Responsible
	No variation				X		Great deal
	Variation ignored				X		Addressed
E. Study skills	Undeveloped			X			Developed
	No variation				X		Great deal
	Variation ignored			X			Addressed
F. Social skills	Undeveloped				X		Developed
	No variation				X		Great deal
	Variation ignored			X			Addressed
G. Willingness to perform	Reticent			X			Willing
	No variation				X		Great deal
	Variation ignored			X			Addressed
H. Feedback needs	Weak			X			Strong
	No variation			X			Great deal
	Variation ignored	X					Addressed
I. Self-assessment skills	Undeveloped		X				Developed
	No variation		X				Great deal
	Variation ignored		X				Addressed

J. Sense of fairness	Unclear			No info			Clear
	No variation						Great deal
	Variation ignored						Addressed
K. Reaction to testing	Tranquil				X		Anxious
	No variation		X				Great deal
	Variation ignored		X				Addressed
L. Parental expectations	Unclear		X				Clear
	Low	X					High
	Unimportant					X	Important
	No variation		X				Great deal
	Variation ignored	X					Addressed

VIII. ASSESSMENT POLICY

(See attached table)

VIII. What policies influence classroom assessment?

ORIGINS OF POLICY

FOCUS OF POLICY	Federal	State	District	School	Department	Collegial
Testing	A. Does a standard exist? B. Does teacher know standard? C. Does it impact practice? How?	A. B. C.	A. yes B. yes C. yes		A. B. C.	A. B. C.
Reporting	A. B. C.		A. yes B. yes C. yes	A. B. C.	A. B. C.	
Homework			A. yes B. no C. no	A. B. C.	A. B. C.	A. B. C.
Class Size			A. yes B. no C. no			
Selection Spec. Prog. and/or Recognition	A. B. C.	A. B. C.	A. yes B. no C. no			
Attendance			A. yes B. no C. no			A. B. C.
Content to Be Taught (Inc. Text Selection)			A. yes B. yes C. yes	A. B. C.	A. B. C.	A. B. C.

BIOLOGY CASE STUDY #1

Background Information

This biology teacher is on the staff of a four year high school located in a large urban school district. The physical plant has all the characteristics of an older, urban high school. The tall, imposing structure is located on a busy intersection in the heart of a stable middle and working class neighborhood.

This observation was conducted over a three week period of time during April, 1986. Discussions and interviews with the teacher took place during the days the observations were conducted.

The teacher has been teaching high school biology for approximately 15 years. He has arranged his schedule so that his four sections of General Biology meet in the morning. General Biology meets one of the science requirements for graduation but students who are not inclined to science or have a weak academic record may take other science courses instead. Counselors are a significant factor in deciding who takes which level of science. Classes average around 26 students per section. A few Asian and black students are visible, but probably not in representative numbers to the number of ethnic minorities in the school. Boys and girls appear to be nearly equally represented across the 4 sections.

After a quick lunch, he moves directly into the Experiental Biology class, a course which he designed himself. It is an elective course which was originally intended to engage the student in scientific research. The course has evolved to emphasize intense scientific study of an experiential nature rather than comprehensive research. He purposely steers away from calling it "Advanced Biology," although the course is intentionally geared for the advanced student who has a genuine interest in biology. Eleven students, mostly boys, are enrolled in Experiential Biology this year.

The biology rooms were designed by the teacher some years ago when the science wing was remodeled. It reflects his desire to provide multi-purpose spaces for students to pursue independent and group work. It is spacious and inviting. There are always students in the area, whether the teacher is in class or not. The main room consists of a classroom laboratory with the standard tables, chairs and long counters and an adjoining but separate seminar room. Around the parameters are small cubicles for independent research and a room for animal study.

I. ASSESSMENT PURPOSES

This teacher's purpose for assessment is directly related to his long term goal for the students, whether they take General Biology or Experiential Biology.

"I want to affect an attitude toward science on the part of these students. I am not interested in isolated pieces of information but rather students' learning that science is discovery; it takes long term involvement and it's experiential. Science is an attitude and a commitment. Science has those people who fit the norm and do science the prescribed way. Most science is done that way. Science also has the 'odd balls,' those who come to science through creative, non-traditional means. I tend to favor the odd balls.

"I am interested in process and inquiry and the way students go about solving their problems, the questions they ask and their seriousness of purpose."

His purpose for assessment follows his own mandate to "do science with my students." Doing science means investigating phenomena with an open, questioning approach, conducting experiments, drawing hypotheses, making generalizations and connecting concepts and ideas about the natural world. It takes a willingness to stick with problems, probing, following leads, being systematic yet ideosyncratic in one's pursuit. He consciously shys away from language that describes his assessment purposes in terms of "diagnosis, grouping, motivating" therefore, it is consistently difficult to determine how well informed he is regarding certain practices. It is safe, however, to describe his purposes and practices as consistent and unified, attributed to a strong philosophy of science and teaching. He chooses his words carefully and cautiously to describe his purposes. He is primarily interested in student achievement but commitment, seriousness of purpose, and willingness to participate are intimately connected to doing science, and his class is set up in that manner.

A. Diagnosing individual student needs

This teacher assesses informally through observation of students primarily for the purposes of instruction, not assessment. The structure of the class, particularly when they are working in a laboratory mode, is designed to provide students with an opportunity to receive individual help with their projects. It is evident that he is constantly watching students, listening to their questions and interactions. In several instances he adjusted the lesson through instructional methods such as pacing, reviewing or informal suggestions during lab time. Twice he noted some confusion on a worksheet in his first period class and incorporated these problems into his opening instructions and remarks in the remaining classes.

There is no evidence that he does anything special to size up students at the beginning of the year. He makes yearly adjustments in the curriculum based upon his own professional work in science and what works with students over time. Student interests are somewhat of a factor in his changes and he captures these through informal discussions. He notes that certain laboratories such as the fruit fly experiment of reproduction are difficult and confusing but "classic" science and he would rather adjust the pace of instruction and the means of arriving at the result rather than eliminate the laboratory because of its difficulty. "When students finish such a laboratory they have a real feeling of accomplishment. They should. They have done some real science."

It is up to the student to apply him or herself to this curriculum. The consistency of the student's grade over the course of the year (only a few students shift more than one grade designation during the year) indicates that from the teacher's point of view students reveal "what kind of student they are" early in the year based upon his criteria (see Grading I.C.). He talks about "A" students and "C" students in such a way that I conclude he judges a student's capability in very broad terms but he says emphatically, "All students can get an A if they want." He makes few adjustments based upon an informal determination of student needs and the diagnosing he does do is not for assessment purposes but rather instructional planning.

C. Assigning grades

The teacher shows great impatience with questions regarding assigning grades for assessment purposes. "Grades are not my major tool of teaching. They don't get in my way of doing science. I don't value grades as much as the personal impact I have on students about science. Being wrong on grades is not as critical as how a kid experiences the class. Grading is necessary only because of the bureaucratic requirements of the system. It doesn't often have anything to do with getting something out of the class. I try to reduce the damage, the negative effects of grades. When a student asks about grades, I change the subject to, 'Why are you here?'"

While he assesses the quality of the homework on a regular basis, students only receive a grade once a term. There are no tests in either course (See II.A.1 for explanation). The gradebook consists of a set of period marks, checks and pluses for homework, and attendance which somehow translate into a term grade. Class participation is a critical factor in the final grade but there is no evidence that records on participation, except for attendance, are kept. The laboratory notebook is a summative activity and includes a record of all activities. Student notebooks are assessed according to a criteria check sheet at the end of each term which is inserted into the notebook. (See II.A.3 for criteria.) Students are given the following grading policy in the General Biology course at the beginning of the year:

> A=
> All homework completed; no more than three late assignments. Completed assignments must demonstrate full comprehension of material. Laboratory notebook completed; must include full record of all activities; data record, collection and analysis; charts, graphs and tables as required; well organized and written; scientific drawings accurate and properly labeled; and conclusions which demonstrate full comprehension of laboratory investigations. Class participation must be industrious; structured and individual work periods must be used productively for investigations pertinent to the subject. Students are expected to participate fully in all class discussions.
>
> B=
> All homework completed; no more than six late assignments. Completed assignments must demonstrate general understanding of material.

Laboratory notebook completed; must include satisfactory record of all activities; data record, collection and analysis; charts, graphs and tables as required; sufficiently organized to allow reader to follow investigation records; answers and conclusions should be satisfactorily structured; illustrations that are complete and correctly labeled; and conclusions which demonstrate general comprehension of laboratory investigations.

Class participation must be industrious; structured and individual work periods must be used productively for investigations pertinent to the subject. Students are expected to participate in class discussions. Minimal distractions from classroom activities.

C=
Satisfactory completion of three-fourths of homework assignments, not more than nine of which are late. Fair understanding of material/concepts from assigned reading and laboratory investigations. Notebook must reflect participation in class. Inadequate completion of all learning activities.

D=
Minimal participation in class and completion of course requirements. Satisfactory completion of two-thirds of homework assignments. Classroom behavior may be a factor in determining this grade.

F=
Major projects not completed; homework unsatisfactory or incomplete; does not demonstrate understanding of course concepts.

The Experiential Biology class is given a similar policy at the beginning of the year.

Course work includes the following:

1. Formal notebook. Full summary of experience based upon each student's experience. Each student is responsible for documenting all activities/experiments conducted during the grading period.
2. Homework. Readings and assignments.
3. Seminars. Presentations, participation and write-up.
4. Field trips. Participation, recordkeeping.
5. Laboratory. Investigations, recordkeeping and formal write-up.
6. Attitude. Contributions to class, sharing in activities, individual and team participation.
7. General notebook. Informal record; collection of information from handouts, field trip notes; laboratory investigations, personal notes.
8. Special activities. Independent projects, guest speakers, special projects, etc.

Grades are established according to the following criteria:

A=
Full participation in all areas; complete understanding of concepts; assignments completed on time; demonstration of independent study skills and initiative. Class benefits from the participation of these students.

B=
Most of the above criteria met. Must have contributed to the positive atmosphere of the class. May have some late assignments, but all must be completed at the conclusion of the grading period.

C=
Poor participation. Some assignments missing. Lack of demonstrated understanding of concepts.

D=
Poor participation. Assignments late and/or missing. Lack of demonstrated understanding of concepts. Behavior severely disruptive.

F=
No meeting basic requirements of the class.

D. Grouping for instruction within the class

The teacher does not group for instruction. He believes that students should be allowed to seek out their own partners for collaboration and support, unless it interferes with the learning of others. He allows considerable freedom for students to learn in their own style hence, grouping is casual and peer generated for the most. Students frequently work together on homework, class work and laboratory experiments.

E. Identifying students for special services

There is no evidence to indicate whether the teacher does this or not. Counselors have the responsibility for placement and biology is just one of several course students can take to fill the science requirement.

F. Controlling and motivating students

There is no evidence that this teachers uses assessment in order to control student behavior but he does use a grade in order to communicate to a student regarding her/his motivation, and he spells out what class participation means in the grading policy. Sara, a senior, is an example of such practice. Sara "knows a lot about science. She is going on to study science but she has a lax attitude. Although her work was 'B' work, I gave her a 'C' last term because I wanted to send her and her parents a message: there is more to being a biologist than she is exhibiting." Sara or her parents, however, do not challenge or question the grade. The teacher assumes that she understands the message that he is sending. He indicated that he had talked with her about her lax attitude sometime during the term.

He wants students to be motivated to do science, not motivated to obtain a grade. He gives feedback on all regular assignments immediately so that students know how they are doing in learning science. None of these are graded. Rather, he assesses student participation, commitment and involvement in the labs as factors indicating a motivation to learn. He does this in all five periods through observation and interaction. He keeps no special records on this, apparently storing the information in his head.

G. Evaluating instruction (see also I. A. Diagnosing Individual Needs.)

I observed the teacher modifying his instruction several times based upon his observations of the students in the laboratory activity and his assessment of the homework which he checks immediately upon student entry into class. Evaluating instruction is a priority for this teacher but he relies upon his usual methods of assessing student performance--observation and interaction with students.

H. Communicating achievement expectations (See I.C. for some overlap)

This teacher has high expectations of students as he does himself. His own seriousness of purpose is conveyed in his intense manner during class. It appears that students are affected by this posture.

At the beginning of the year he hands out his grading policy, which consists of a one page criteria and which indicates his clearest statement of expectations (see I.C for description). Homework is profuse and regular. Several students commented informally that the class "is alot of work."

George is an example of his concern about standards. George is a senior star basketball student who transferred into the school this year. The school scrambled around to accommodate him. The teacher was told that George was a very good student in science, but the teacher concluded otherwise. "George appears to have been moved along because of his athletic ability and his social skills. He handles people with sophistication. I was somewhat lenient during basketball season but last term I gave him an "F" to communicate to him that he no longer could slide by on his performance." If grades are any indicator of communicating expectations, this teacher applies rather high standards. At least one-fourth of his students received D's and F's each term during this year.

I. Communicating affective expectations

Because doing science is intrinsically connected to a conceptualization of science he attends to student commitment, and attitude through participation which is defined on his grading policy (see 1. C for description). Thus, for this teacher there is no difference between academic expectations and affective expectations. At the beginning of the year he tells students that they have to figure out for themselves the answer to the issue of motivation: "What am I going to do to to demonstrate my participation?" He observes students in labs and questions them after but the only written records he keeps on participation is an attendance record.

The teacher's refusal to test (see II.A. 1) as damaging to the students' as learners and makers of science is one indication of his concern for student self-concept. His system of gradebook notation (see I. C.) which includes period marks for positive attendance rather than negative absence is a simple example of how he guards against low academic self-concept.

II. ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

A. Assessment of achievement

1. Teacher-developed paper and pencil tests

Three or four years into teaching the teacher asked himself, "Why am I testing?" He had used tests which accompanied the textbook or sometimes prepared his own. He concluded that testing was not connected to the main purpose of his teaching which was to engender a science experience for each student. Using tests for grading purposes was particularly defeating for many students. For a certain kind of student, tests were, in fact, damaging. He wanted students to be able to freely participate in the course activities and he wanted to be able to look out for that. "With 'A' students you know they know by the quality of the assignments and the nature and level of the interactions with me and each other. You don't need to test. With the others, tests are damaging."

Informal discussions with several students pointed out that they liked the fact that tests were not a part of the course design. One senior said, "Just because you get a grade of 'C' on a test does not mean that you haven't learned alot. Sometimes it's just the opposite."

To assess, therefore, whether this teacher is informed or uninformed regarding paper and pencil tests, text-embedded tests and quizzes and even performance tests was difficult because he categorically rejects these devices as inconsistent with his philosophy of science and his purposes for teaching.

3. Performance assessments

Students are primarily judged upon the basis of their performance in both the General Biology and Experiential Biology classes. The teacher relies upon student products in the form of homework and the laboratory notebook. Observation and interaction of students defines his judgment of the class participation factor but no written records except for attendance are kept on this critical area.

This teacher's grading criteria (See I.C. for full description, set the minimal standards for each grade equivalent and are spelled out in terms of amount and completeness of homework and laboratory experiments. Criterion for discerning levels of class participation is also indicated (See II.A.9. Regular Assignments for further description). Notebooks are the summative experience for each term and the teacher lists the following criteria on a sheet which he inserts into the notebook in General Biology. He indicates the term grade on this form. Space is allowed for written comments on each of these items: neatness; completeness; in order; hypothesis/conclusions; graphs/charts; data observations; drawings. Class participation is also listed here.

A survey of only a small sample of student notebooks indicated that "A" students were much more fluent in writing than the "D" or "F" students. Not only were the notebooks of failing students less complete and orderly, there was an obvious lack of attention to thoughtful inquiry, interest, and inquisitiveness. They were much less expressive. The teacher noted that his informal assessments during class and lab time in the form of questions pointed up those students who were understanding science conceptually but were not able to write expressively, however, there was usually a consistency in performance in the notebook work and in the laboratory/class setting. Whether students understand the criteria or have been instructed in how to improve their performance in this area is unclear.

4. Oral questioning strategies

Oral questioning plays a major role in his daily instruction and assessment of progress. The teacher also distinguishes high performing students from low performing students primarily in their ability to generate hypotheses/conclusions and questions/concepts.

He usually responds to student questions with a question. His usual comment is, "... And what else?" Most significant is the obvious wait time he gave students to answer. If there is a confusion on the part of the student or a fumbling for words, he rephrases the question. While he might spend most of class time moving around the laboratory intently responding to student problems with suggestions, help often comes in the form of questions of recall, comparision or analysis.

He demonstrates considerable skill in asking frequent and germane questions but he admits with a smile that he had no name for what he does, although questions are central to his style. He indicates that he is familiar with a few time honored principles such backtracking when a question is too difficult and avoiding embarrassing questions which put students down.

5. Standardized tests

There are no standardized tests administered in the science department. One can only infer from the teacher's position on paper and pencil tests that he would strongly object to a trend in this area.

6. Group assessment methods

These are not used. While students are allowed and often encouraged by the nature of the activity to work together and assist one another, the efforts of each person is assessed in the form of homework and the laboratory notebook. The teacher considers a student's willingness to work with others as a factor in class participation but in the end it is the quality of the laboratory notebook which forms the basis for the judgment of individual merit.

7. Opinions of other teachers

This teacher spends most of his time preparing for class or meeting with students and rarely takes time to socialize during the day. Once, during an observation two other science teachers came in rather hurriedly explaining that nominations for the science award for next year had to go in immediately. He gave his opinion without hesitation and his colleagues tacitly agreed. They appeared to have agreement about who the "outstanding" students were. The fact that he does not test and does not care whether his colleagues know is an important indication of his independence. Whether he consults with other teachers about student achievement is unknown.

8. Assessment of reasoning skills

Assessment of reasoning skills is a central part of what this teacher does. Reasoning skills are defined by the ability to generate hypotheses, draw conclusions, form questions and draw together ideas and concepts. In fact, he indicates that it is the ability to discern concepts and generate questions which differentiate the "A" level student from the "C" level student in general biology. The "A" student will be operating more like a scientist while the "C" student may be having more of a nature studies experience, but he considers the differing experiences both valid in the context of his class. Experiential Biology students should be able to apply reasoning skills to serious scientific problems and project.

9. Regular assignments

All homework assignments are checked daily for thoroughness, completeness and comprehension during the first two minutes of entry to class. In that way, the teacher knows immediately where there are problems in understanding so that he can clear them up immediately. He notes whether they are using the text, following instructions or "just giving any response."

Students are responsible for numerous activities around the laboratory experience which all become part of the notebook, the heart of the science class. How a student worked during lab would be mentally noted as class participation through teacher's observations and interactions. Homework and laboratory activities are both considered regular assignments and it is the student's responsibility to include all the work assigned in class, and homework in the notebook.

11. Student self ratings

These are not used. If a student feels a grade has been unfair, he or she may ask for reconsideration. Based upon the teacher's own description of the process, what ensues is a dialogue in which the teacher makes his case for his standards and the student does the same. He has been known to change a grade if the student can make her/his case but more often it has been a student whose academic self perception is skewed. In such an instance, the teacher holds firm, and these challenges are very rare.

12. Proportion of all assessments

Assessment of reasoning skills included in oral and regular assignments.

14. Strategies for integrating assessment and instruction

The main way the teacher integrates assessment and instruction is through his questioning strategies. He questions students continually, trying to get them to stretch their thinking and use their learning from previous activities. He also comments orally on homework and student progress in the laboratory activity. He does this both individually and with the entire group. Students are regularly encouraged to come into class on their free time to catch up and complete the work.

(See IIA. 9 Regular Assignments for discussion.)

15. Dealing with cheating

Student cheating is not a particular concern for the teacher. He includes enough variety in labs from year-to-year so that a student who decides to cheat can make a gross mistake. "Students who are 'getting it' are usually consistent in their work. Participation and commitment cannot be misrepresented." Occasionally it has happened that a student cheats by copying and if he suspects he'll set a trap with an assignment that is new or different. Then, he'll orally question the learning. If the student has a perfect paper and no cognition when interacting, then he knows there is cheating. "I listen closely to what they say in class."

B. Assessment of affect

1. Observing individual students.

The teacher relies upon his observations and talking with a student to determine her/his class participation. Despite the interactive nature of the class and the many opportunities for connecting with students during class time the teacher still says that the biggest obstacle is "not knowing all my students all the time."

He looks for a variety of indicators of participation, and he often uses the terms "seriousness of purpose" and "attitude" to convey the fuller meaning of this construct. The level of industriousness, whether the individual student works productively on the subject at hand and to what degree a student participates in class are indicators of class participation. If a student is not actively participating in class discussion he will make allowances for this if he believes the student is conscientiously doing her/his work. In the case of a Vietnamese student in the Experiential Biology class who was not actively interacting with his peers in a laboratory assignment, the teacher mentioned that he looks for other indicators of involvement such as attendance, level of concentration on task and the level of interaction he has alone with him. Since conceptual understanding is related to doing science the teacher believes it is his job to attend to as many different ways for a student to demonstrate conceptual understanding as possible. Participation, therefore, appears to be important because it ensures that the teacher will be able to assess conceptual understanding more easily, however, it remains an illusive construct. What is lacking here is an understanding of how students comprehend and interpret his criteria.

2. Observing group interaction (See II. B. 1. for overlap)

Students work together on certain labs but are free to choose their partners. He makes changes in seating or groups only if they interfer with the learning of others. In the case of a lesson with the purpose to review the process of cell division by myosis and mitosis students were able to choose between watching the film selected for class viewing or moving to the adjacent seminar room to review their texts and complete the lab sheet on their own or in small groups. It appears that how a student works with others, how on task they are able to remain in a laboratory situation are factors which affect the assessment of participation. It is unclear how well defined these areas are for the students.

3. Using questionnaires

This teacher would not use questionnaires.

4. Using interviews

There is not enough information about the teacher's informal conversations with students. Formal interviewing would not likely be used.

5. Opinions of other teachers

There is no information that this teacher seeks out or is interested in the opinions of other teachers. Given his philosophy, one would infer that this does not occur.

7 Opinions of parents

Parent opinion is not actively solicited nor do parents interfer or involve themselves in any of his assessment decisions. The teacher has rarely had a parent call to question a grade or judgment he has made about a student. He views this as endemic to high school life.

At the appropriate week of the term the teacher sends home the notices of students who are failing or have failed a term. He does this using the school form. He calls attention to absences from class, missing homework assignments as they affect whether or not the student is participating in the class.

8. Past student records

In the case of "problem students" he has checked past records to gain an understanding of the student when his or her behavior has been problematic. Jim, a senior in Experiential Biology, is a case in point.

Since September Jim had been a disruptive force in the class and one of the reasons that the teacher believed the class was not doing truly advanced work. "He's the limit to my resources. I have checked on his file and found that he did some weird things in junior high, so he has a record to testing the limits. I have the impression that he is a kid who is tightly wrapped;

any minute he could go flying off. But he is smart and clever. He is never quite so blatant that I have had to take action. I do not know why I have kept him here--perhaps because I have not felt clear about what to do with him. But it is not my job to try to mental work on students."

In the third week of April the teacher had Jim removed from class. "This is the first time I have ever gone to a counselor and said, 'I don't have the documentation on this student. I just don't want him in my class anymore. He's not participating.' I always provide documentation of student behavior. The counselors know that when I ask for a student to be removed from the class that I have dealt with it and exhausted all avenues. If I were challenged I am on thin ground with this one but because I rarely remove kids I can by-pass the process this time. He's getting D's but I am keeping kids who are failing so I would have had trouble if I had to justify this solely on the basis of academic work.

"After seeing his counselor he came back and asked why he was dropped and I said, 'You were not participating. You don't need this class for graduation.' Jim retorted, 'But I need it for myself.' Actually he needed it for his parents. His parents wanted him to have it and that finally became evident. I then set up an appointment with him, his counselor and me but he didn't show nor have his parents called."

10. Relative importance

The nature of the laboratory experience and the choice of student learning methods does not lend to factoring out these methods.

C. Assessment of ability

1. Meaning of ability

For this teacher, ability may mean full comprehension of material as evidenced by conceptual attainment demonstrated through verbal and written skills. Ability per se does not seem to be of major importance to this teacher. Willingness to participate and seriousness of purpose would affect whether a student was able to "do science."

The teacher consciously avoids the word "ability" to describe his students. He believes all students are capable of getting A's in his course and he admits that he has a hard time understanding how students can settle for less. He recognizes that high school students have many demands upon their attention. He doesn't expect all students to have the same enthusiasm for science but he prides himself on getting most of the students interested in some unit of study at some time during the term. "A" students are known by their performance and their continuous interest. Truly advanced students such as those who take Experiental Biology are known as "those whom you can interest in anything." On a few occasions when he referred to his "A" students and his "C" students, he implied a sense of a capability to conceptualize and critically assess the science experience. Just how much he believed this to be developmental or innate remains unclear.

2. Check decisions

One of the problems this teacher encountered this year is that his Experiental Biology class was not truly "advanced" by his definition. Their interest, commitment and attitude had consequences for his instructional objectives in that the kind of activities he would have planned as he had in the past are just not possible with this group. The ability for a student to sustain interest may be related to the environmemt or the effect of certain personalities on the group such as Jim (see sect II. B.8 for a description) for when Jim was absent he believed that the productivity of the class changed dramatically. In former years the Experiential Biology class produced a film in conjunction with the Northwest Film Study Center. This year's group is not "capable" of that because of failure in seriousness of purpose and attitude.

D. Text assessments

This teacher uses the text for some homework assignments. There is no information available that he draws from the text for oral questions for class use. Because he rejected tests, I did not do an analysis of test questions or guidelines.

III. CRITERIA FOR SELECTING ASSESSMENT METHODS (A-K)

Criteria for selecting assessments were difficult to discern and were not brought out in the interview. It is questionable whether many of these criteria are even a consideration for him in terms of his teaching framework. His assessment methodology consists of observation, interaction during class, and review of written assignments. It is fixed by long practice and seems not subject to review on his part.

Everything he does must fit his purpose for teaching science as this is the single most important criteria he uses for selecting his methods. The fact that he uses a criteria so that his assignments can be translated into a grade is secondary. His methods do match the material taught as do the applicability to measuring thinking skills. The origin of the assessments are all his own as are the required activities. He would probably not consider using any outside means of assessment. Similarly there is no data as to whether he considers ease of development, scoring and time a factor in how he assesses assignments.

IV. QUALITY OF ASSESSMENTS

A. Paper and Pencil Assessments

The teacher uses no tests. Homework and laboratory assignments are considered regular assignments which are teacher devised for the most part.

He assesses these with a variety of means, from a simple check/plus system on the homework to written comments and oral feedback on lab assignments. These are considered instructional devises rather than paper and pencil assessments.

B. Performance assessments

Performance assessment is the chief method by which he measures student achievement. Observations and teacher judgments do play a major role in the assessment of affect--specifically student participation as the indicator of motivation and seriousness of purpose. These assessments determine the final term grade and he specifies the standards of quality in his grading policy.

There is a clear description of the standard in his grading policy and he lists the criteria by which the notebooks are judged. Homework received a plus for good work, a check for acceptable work, an "X" if it is not completed and a slash mark if it is late. There are many homework assignments and they appear valid. Records are carefully kept. Attendance is duly noted. Class participation is not recorded. Performance samples are not used because he believes that stifles creativity. It is difficult to discern whether students are fully aware of the criteria and whether their grades would improve if the teacher provided good samples of performance and took more time to communicate expectations to students. The number of student failing grades (D's and F's) is problematic to me.

C. Oral questions

As noted in II.4 the teacher manages his questioning strategies effectively. The range of questions during instruction are quite broad and while the teacher's style is quite fast paced, he does manage sufficient wait time. He uses questions as the chief form of assessment during lab and class instruction but he keeps no records of student activity in this area.

V. FEEDBACK PROCEDURES

A. Oral and nonverbal feedback

Oral feedback is delivered most frequently on an individual basis during laboratory time or before and after class. It is usually in the form of a question or explanation regarding a student difficulty in understanding the content or the activity. It is rarely negative. He communicates positive feedback through nonverbal means, usually with a smile, certainly with his attention to those who seek it.

The evidence from observation confirms that the teacher makes no differentiation in his interactions with students as to whether they are strong/weak students or correct/incorrect in their responses or male/female. He attends to whomever asks and manages to get around to all who seek him as well as others whom he simply checks on.

The atmosphere of the class is best characterized as one where students are respected as individuals who are both capable and interesting people. The teacher is both intense yet relaxed, always ready with a quick smile and a recognition of a student's humor. In terms of individual differences, he says, "I try to keep blinders on. Occasionally it is hard to do as with a student who came in with a mohawk style hair cut. Eventually I had to remove him."

His rule is never to discuss students in front of others and he prefers to discuss performance or grades after class or aside from the group. It appears that he restricts his classroom feedback to achievement and to those factors that indicate level of participation in class discussions and laboratories.

B. Written Feedback

Only a small sample of student notebooks were available for analysis. Homework assignments were studied over a week's period but the evidence simply suggests that written comments are rather sparce and that he treats strong and weak students the same. He indicated in interview that "'A' students actually don't need the feedback as much as the 'C' student" because they have "gotten it." He prefers to be positive rather than negative in his symbols and comments and he likes to attend to misunderstandings immediately. In fact, everything that he does is immediate to the moment. This is consistent in both the written and oral feedback.

Uses samples of performance as feedback...

He does not like to use samples of performance as feedback, either in the form of former student work or in terms of his own work. He believes that this can be limiting to the ingenuity and creativity of the students. I conclude from the sufficient number of low grades (one-fourth of his classes) that this could be strategy for improving student performance.

VI. DESCRIPTION OF TEACHER AND ASSESSMENT

B. Teacher's expenditure of time

1. Proportion of time spent in teaching activities

The teacher indicates that the majority of his out-of-class time is spent in planning. He is constantly running around the school, gathering material and equipment for class. One day every two weeks he travels to Eugene where he continues his own research in genetics at the University of Oregon. He believes that being a good science educator requires that teachers engage in curriculum development through their own activity in their field.

C. **Teacher characteristics**

Attributions for reasons of student success/failure.

These figures are inferred from the data available.

VII. TEACHER'S PERCEPTION OF STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

This teacher views students as capable, responsible and interesting people. He does not stereotype students. While variations cannot be ignored, he would probably choose to consider differences as a human relations issue rather than a curricular one. He pointed out where problems in such areas as maturity, study skills and willingness to learn affect performance and achievement. He does not view these general biology students as much different from other groups he has taught in the past. The student characteristics in the Experiential Biology class this year, however, had affected the depth of study and the level of projects in which the students were able to be engaged.

VIII. ORIGINS OF POLICY

As a general rule, beyond requirements for reporting achievement information and meeting attendance requirements, this teacher is either unaware or does not consciously adhere to any school or district policies as governing student assessment.

He gives minimal compliance to all policies and procedures which affect his teaching. He finally submitted objectives for his Experiential Biology class to the district when it came to his attention that there was a district wide curriculum guide. He pays no attention to it, however, because he believes that those objectives are simply minimum expectations which he is going beyond.

The fact that he doesn't give tests and is not sure whether or not his colleagues know is an indication that if there is a school or department policy regarding such practices it is enforced rather loosely or arbitrarily. He finally wrote up his grading policy when it came to his attention via a student that he should have one in writing. He is a very independent teacher who may infer that his reputation as a fine teacher allows him some leeway in terms of compliance to certain policies. In terms of content to be taught, it appears that he goes well beyond usual standards.

PROFILE OF BIOLOGY CASE #1

I. ASSESSMENT PURPOSES

A. Diagnosing individual student needs	Uninformed					X	Well informed
	Irrelevant					X	Relevant
	Useless					X	Useful
	Not used					X	Used frequently
B. Diagnosing group needs	Uninformed					X	Well informed
	Irrelevant					X	Relevant
	Useless				X		Useful
	Not used				X		Used frequently
C. Assigning grades	Uninformed				X		Well informed
	Irrelevant				X		Relevant
	Useless	X					Useful
	Not used		X				Used frequently
D. Grouping for instruction within class	Uninformed			X			Well informed
	Irrelevant			X			Relevant
	Useless			X			Useful
	Not used	X					Used frequently
E. Identifying students for special services	Uninformed			No info			Well informed
	Irrelevant			X			Relevant
	Useless			No info			Useful
	Not used			No info			Used frequently
F. Controlling and motivating students	Uninformed				X		Well informed
	Irrelevant				X		Relevant
	Useless			X			Useful
	Not used			X			Used frequently
G. Evaluating instruction	Uninformed					X	Well informed
	Irrelevant					X	Relevant
	Useless					X	Useful
	Not used					X	Used frequently
H. Communicating achievement expectations	Uninformed					X	Well informed
	Irrelevant					X	Relevant
	Useless					X	Useful
	Not used					X	Used frequently

I. Communicating affective expectations

Uninformed			X			Well informed
Irrelevant					X	Relevant
Useless					X	Useful
Not used					X	Used frequently

J. Providing test-taking experience

Uninformed			N/A			Well informed
Irrelevant			N/A			Relevant
Useless			N/A			Useful
Not used	X					Used frequently

K. Relative importance of purposes

Given "100 importance points" to distribute across the purposes listed below, how would you distribute those points to reflect the relative importance of the decisions listed?

Diagnosing individual needs	15
Diagnosing group needs	10
Assigning grades	
Grouping for instruction	
Identifying students for special services	
Controlling and motivating	
Evaluating instruction	15
Communicating achievement expectations	35
Communicating affective expectations	25
Test taking experience	
	100 points

II. ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

A. Assessment of Achievement

1. Teacher-developed paper and pencil tests and quizzes	Uninformed			No info			Well informed
	Inappropriate			X			Appropriate
	Useless			X			Useful
	Not used	X					Used frequently
2. Text-embedded paper and pencil tests and quizzes	Uninformed			No info			Well informed
	Inappropriate			X			Appropriate
	Useless			X			Useful
	Not used	X					Used frequently
3. Performance assessments	Uninformed				X		Well informed
	Inappropriate					X	Appropriate
	Useless					X	Useful
	Not used				X		Used frequently
4. Oral questioning strategies	Uninformed				X		Well informed
	Inappropriate					X	Appropriate
	Useless					X	Useful
	Not used					X	Used frequently
5. Standardized tests	Uninformed			N/A			Well informed
	Inappropriate	X					Appropriate
	Useless	X					Useful
	Not used	X					Used frequently
6. Group assessment methods	Uninformed			N/A			Well informed
	Inappropriate				X		Appropriate
	Useless				X		Useful
	Not used	X					Used frequently
7. Opinions of other teachers	Uninformed				X		Well informed
	Inappropriate			X			Appropriate
	Useless			X			Useful
	Not used	X					Used frequently
8. Assessment of reasoning skills	Uninformed					X	Well informed
	Inappropriate					X	Appropriate
	Useless					X	Useful
	Not used					X	Used frequently

9. Regular assignments

Uninformed					X	Well informed
Inappropriate					X	Appropriate
Useless					X	Useful
Not used					X	Used frequently

10. Student peer rating

Uninformed		No info				Well informed
Inappropriate			X			Appropriate
Useless			X			Useful
Not used	X					Used frequently

11. Student self ratings

Uninformed		No info				Well informed
Inappropriate				X		Appropriate
Useless				X		Useful
Not used		X				Used frequently

12. Proportion of all assessments for all purposes that are of various types

Teacher-developed paper and pencil tests	
Text-embedded paper and pencil tests	
Performance assessments	25
Oral questions	25
Standardized tests	
Opinions of other teachers	
Regular assignments	50
Group assessments	
Student peer ratings	
Student self ratings	
	100%

13. Cognitive levels of questions posed in:

	Study and Discussion Questions	Oral Questions	Tests and Quizzes
Recall	30%	20%	--
Analysis	10%	30%	—
Comparison	20%	20%	--
Inference	20%	30%	—
Evaluation	20%	--	--

14. Strategies for integrating assessment and instruction	Uninformed					X	Well informed
	Inappropriate					X	Appropriate
	Useless					X	Useful
	Not used					X	Used frequently
15. Dealing with cheating	Uninformed					X	Well informed
	Inappropriate					X	Appropriate
	Useless					X	Useful
	Not used			X			Used frequently

B. Assessment of Affect

1. Observing individual students	Uninformed				X		Well informed
	Inappropriate					X	Appropriate
	Useless					X	Useful
	Not used					X	Used frequently
2. Observing group interactions	Uninformed			No info			Well informed
	Inappropriate					X	Appropriate
	Useless					X	Useful
	Not used		X				Used frequently
3. Using questionnaires	Uninformed			N/A			Well informed
	Inappropriate			X			Appropriate
	Useless			X			Useful
	Not used	X					Used frequently
4. Using interviews (formal and informal)	Uninformed			No info			Well informed
	Inappropriate				X		Appropriate
	Useless				X		Useful
	Not used			No info			Used frequently
5. Opinions of other teachers	Uninformed			N/A			Well informed
	Inappropriate				X		Appropriate
	Useless				X		Useful
	Not used	X					Used frequently
6. Opinions of other students	Uninformed			N/A			Well informed
	Inappropriate				X		Appropriate
	Useless				X		Useful
	Not used	X					Used frequently

7. Opinions of parents

Uninformed			X			Well informed
Inappropriate			X			Appropriate
Useless		X				Useful
Not used	X					Used frequently

8. Past student records

Uninformed				X		Well informed
Inappropriate				X		Appropriate
Useless				X		Useful
Not used			X			Used frequently

9. Checklist of affective characteristics measured:

I Seriousness of purpose
I Motivation and effort
I Attitude
____ Learning style
____ Interests
____ Values
____ Preferences
____ Academic self-concept
____ Locus of control
____ Anxiety
____ Maturity
____ Social skills
____ Study skills
____ Other (specify ____________________)

Code:
F = formal assessment conducted
I = informal assessment conducted

10. Relative importance of affective assessment methods:

*Observing individual students	60
*Observing group interactions	27
Using questionnaires	
Using interviews (formal and informal)	10
Opinions of other teachers	
Opinions of other students	
Opinions of parents	
Past student records	3
	100%

*The nature of laboratory experience and the student choice of learning method does not lend to factoring out these methods.

C. Assessment of Ability

1. Meaning of ability for teacher
Value of this factor for the teacher — Important ___ ___ ___ ___ _X_ Unimportant

Measurement of ability
Measured formally ____
Measured informally ____
Not measured _X_

Ingredients considered in assessment of ability, if measured:

FACTOR(S) INCLUDED IN ASSESSMENT	MEASURED HOW?
1. Ability is not a factor separate from science achievement.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

2. Check decisions influenced by results (i.e., change with varying levels of ability).

____ Instructional objectives
____ Instructional strategies
____ Grouping for instruction (within class)
____ Methods for measuring achievement
____ Grading standards
____ Students selected for special services
____ Other (specify ____________________)

D. Text Assessments

Checklist of assessment components provided with text

Available	Used	
No info		Oral questions for class use
X	X	Homework assignments
No info		General assessment guidelines for teachers
X		Paper and pencil tests
No info		Performance assessments
No info		Scoring guidelines
No info		Quality control guidelines
		Other (specify ____________________)

III. CRITERIA FOR SELECTING ASSESSMENT METHODS

A. Results fit purpose	Uninformed					X	Well informed
	Unimportant					X	Important
	Not used					X	Used frequently
B. Method matches material taught	Uninformed					X	Well informed
	Unimportant					X	Important
	Not used					X	Used frequently
C. Ease of development	Uninformed		No info				Well informed
	Unimportant		No info				Important
	Not used		No info				Used frequently
D. Ease of scoring	Uninformed		No info				Well informed
	Unimportant		No info				Important
	Not used		No info				Used frequently
E. Origin of assessment	Uninformed				X		Well informed
	Unimportant				X		Important
	Not used				X		Used frequently
F. Time required to administer	Uninformed				X		Well informed
	Unimportant				X		Important
	Not used				X		Used frequently
G. Degree of objectivity	Uninformed				X		Well informed
	Unimportant				X		Important
	Not used				X		Used frequently
H. Applicability to measuring thinking skills	Uninformed					X	Well informed
	Unimportant					X	Important
	Not used					X	Used frequently
I. Effective control of cheating	Uninformed				X		Well informed
	Unimportant			X			Important
	Not used			X			Used frequently

J. Relative importance of criteria

Results fit purpose	40
Method matches material taught	15
Ease of development	
Ease of scoring	
Origin of assessment	5
Time required to administer	5
Degree of objectivity	5
Applicability to measuring thinking skills	30
Effective control of cheating	
	100%

IV. QUALITY OF ASSESSMENTS

A. Percent of paper and pencil assessments (teacher-developed or text-embedded) having the following characteristics (need not total 100%):

%	
	Clear description of assessment specifications
	Matches content of instruction
	Matches cognitive levels of instruction
	Minimizes time required to gather needed information
	Item format matches desired outcome
	Items clearly written
	Items sample domain
	Scoring procedures planned
	Scoring criteria written for essays
	Clear directions
	High quality reproduction
	Test scheduled to minimize distractions

B. Percent of performance assessments having the following characteristics:

%	
100	Clear description of trait to be measured with levels of proficiency articulated
100	Matches intended outcomes of instruction
100	Minimizes time required to gather needed information
70	Clear performance criteria
Unclear	Students aware of criteria
100	Thoughtful exercises yield performance samples
100	Exercises sample performance domain
	Performance rating planned
100	Results match information needs

C. Percent of oral questions having the following characteristics:

%	
No info	Sampling methods cover range of achievement levels of students
100	Strategies involve everyone
70	Teacher waits for response
80	Student's response given supportive reaction
100	Questions match cognitive levels of instruction
	Written performance records maintained

V. FEEDBACK PROCEDURES

A. For oral and nonverbal feedback

Percent of feedback delivered to students who are:

%	
50	Strong (vs. weak)
50	Correct (vs. incorrect)
50	Male (vs. female)

Percent of feedback having the following characteristics:
See explanation

%	
75	Delivered in class (vs. out of class)
100	Oral (vs. nonverbal)
50	Public (vs. private)
100	Fair (vs. unfair)
70	Focused on achievement (vs. affect)
100	Germane (vs. irrelevant)
100	Immediate (vs. delayed)
90	Positive (vs. negative)

B. For written feedback

Percent of feedback delivered to students who are:
See explanation

%	
Unclear	Strong (vs. weak)
Unclear	Correct (vs. incorrect)
50	Male (vs. female)

Percent of feedback having the following characteristics:

%	
50	Comment (vs. symbol)
75	Positive (vs. negative)
100	Fair (vs. unfair)
100	Germane (vs. irrelevant)
70	Focused on achievement (vs. affect)

Uses samples of performance as feedback — Never _X_ ___ ___ ___ ___ Frequently

Uses public achievement chart as feedback — Never _X_ ___ ___ ___ ___ Frequently

VI. DESCRIPTION OF TEACHER AND ASSESSMENT

A. Teacher's background

1. Teacher experience, number of years:

15+	Overall
15+	At grade level
Unknown	In school
15+	With content

2. Relative contributions of various sources to teacher's knowledge of assessment methodology

%	
5	Teacher preparation training
No info	Inservice training
No info	Ideas and suggestions of colleagues
5	Professional literature
	Teacher's guide to textbooks
90	Own experience in classroom
100%	

B. Teacher's expenditure of time

1. Proportion of time spent in teaching activities
See explanation

%	
30	Planning
30	Teaching (one on one)
30	Teaching (group)
10	Assessing (see list below)
	Other (specify ______)
100%	

2. Proportion of time spent in assessment activities (paper and pencil, performance assessment, oral, assignments)

%	
30	Reviewing and selecting assessments*
30	Developing own assessments*
	Administering
	Scoring and recording
30	Providing feedback
10	Evaluating quality
100%	

*As assignments

C. Teacher characteristics

Role in the classroom	Curriculum maker and presenter	X ___ ___ ___ ___	Servant of policy delivering required content

Expectations of professional self	Expects little					X	Expects a great deal
Structure needs	Rigid				X		Flexible
View of high quality performance	Correctness demanded					X	Degrees of quality eval.
Stereotypic view of students	None	X					Expressed often
Attends to exceptional student	Never			X			Frequently
Sense of performance norms	Unclear				X		Very clear
Orientation to experimentation	No risks					X	Risk taker
Orientation to cheating	No concern	X					Major concern
Amount of cheating	None		X				A great deal
Value of promptness; importance of timely work completion	Unimportant					X	Important

Interpersonal environment of the classroom regarding assessment:

Cooperative	None					X	Frequent
Competitive	None	X					Frequent

Attributions for reasons of student success/failure:
See explanation

70 Due to student
30 Due to teacher
100%

Basis for grading students:

____ Sense of ability
100 Demonstrated achievement
100%

Interpretation of assessment:

____ Norm-referenced
100 Criterion-referenced
100%

VII. TEACHER'S PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

A. Ability to learn	Low					X	High
	No variation			X			Great deal
	Variation ignored			X			Addressed
B. Willingness to learn	Low				X		High
	No variation			X			Great deal
	Variation ignored			X			Addressed
C. Rate of achievement	Low				X		High
	Decreasing			X			Increasing
	No variation		X				Great deal
	Variation ignored		X				Addressed
D. Maturity	Irresponsible					X	Responsible
	No variation			X			Great deal
	Variation ignored			X			Addressed
E. Study skills	Undeveloped				X		Developed
	No variation				X		Great deal
	Variation ignored			X			Addressed
F. Social skills	Undeveloped				X		Developed
	No variation			X			Great deal
	Variation ignored	X					Addressed
G. Willingness to perform	Reticent				X		Willing
	No variation			X			Great deal
	Variation ignored				X		Addressed
H. Feedback needs	Weak				X		Strong
	No variation			X			Great deal
	Variation ignored			X			Addressed
I. Self-assessment skills	Undeveloped			X			Developed
	No variation			X			Great deal
	Variation ignored		X				Addressed
J. Sense of fairness	Unclear			Unknown			Clear
	No variation						Great deal
	Variation ignored						Addressed

K. Reaction to testing	Tranquil	___	___	___	X	___	Anxious
	No variation	___	N/A		___	___	Great deal
	Variation ignored	___	N/A		___	___	Addressed
L. Parental expectations	Unclear	___	No info			___	Clear
	Low	___	No info			___	High
	Unimportant	___	X	___	___	___	Important
	No variation	___	No info			___	Great deal
	Variation ignored	___	No info			___	Addressed

VIII. ASSESSMENT POLICY

(See attached table)

VIII. What policies influence classroom assessment?

ORIGINS OF POLICY

FOCUS OF POLICY	Federal	State	District	School	Department	Collegial
Testing	A. Does a standard exist? B. Does teacher know standard? C. Does it impact practice? How?	A. no B. n/a C. n/a	A. yes B. yes C. yes		A. no B. n/a C. n/a	A. no B. n/a C. n/a
Reporting	A. no B. n/a C. n/a		A. yes B. yes C. Teacher follows guidelines	A. yes B. yes C. Teacher follows guidelines	A. no B. n/a C. n/a	
Homework			A. no info B. no info C. no info	A. no info B. no info C. no info	A. no B. n/a C. n/a	A. no B. n/a C. n/a
Class Size			A. yes B. yes C. no info			
Selection Spec. Prog. and/or Recognition	A. no info B. no info C. no info	A. yes B. yes C. Teacher gives guidelines	A. no info B. no info C. no info			
Attendance			A. yes B. yes C. Teacher adheres to reporting guidelines			A. no B. n/a C. n/a
Content to Be Taught (Inc. Text Selection)			A. yes B. yes C. Teacher meets standards	A. no info B. no info C. no info	A. no info B. no info C. no info	A. no info B. no info C. no info

BIOLOGY CASE STUDY #2

Background Information

This biology teacher is on the staff of a four year high school located in a predmoninantly working class neighborhood where few students continue on to college. This observation was conducted over a three-week period near the end of the 1985-86 school year.

The teacher has been teaching high school science for seventeen years. She began as a student teacher in this particular school and has remained a constant figure in the biology courses ever since. Her schedule consists of four classes of General Biology and one section of Advanced Biology. There are seven periods in the school day, with one being designated for students to consult with teachers and make-up assignments or tests.

Advanced Biology is an elective course which is described by a former student as having the same context as the General Biology course except for a slightly more difficult text. The teacher indicates with frustration that the text is the same one that they are using in the 9th grade class in another high school in the district. She rates the text for her General Biology class at a 7th grade level despite the fact that students are predominantly sophomores and juniors. Classes consist of equal numbers of males and females averaging 22 students per class. In the Advanced Biology class, 5 students were present during observation. The teacher reports consistently small numbers in that class. The neighborhood has a large minority population (Black and Southeast Asian) which is reflected in the school's student body. But there are few minority students in these biology classes and only one in the Advanced Biology class.

The biology wing utilizes an open space concept with three rooms sharing a common entry and partial enclosure, so the teachers must regulate the noise levels in the room for fear of distracting students in the next room. Even under the best of conditions, it is difficult to listen attentively from the back row of the biology class when other classes are in session. The room consists of laboratory tables and chairs with an adjoining storage room. Blackboard space is minimal.

She quickly breaks forth at our first meeting about the research: "You must first understand what kind of school this is and what kind of students we have which make it different from other schools in the district. This is a blue collar school. When I started teaching here 17 years ago there was a high drop-out rate among students. Students went to work in the nearby mill and stayed in this community to live. The mill is closed now and people have to leave the community to work. Now there is a move toward higher education among the students. There is more scholarship money available. We now have a program which can provide money to students for two years of college and if the students prove they can do the work, they will get more money for the last two years."

"I come from the south. I understand the importance of education and I put a lot of emphasis on getting things done. Some kids feel I'm concerned, others say I interfere.

"These students respond best to hands-on learning. They have short attention spans and need a lot of direction. There is a tremendous spread of ability and interest in my classes. Therefore, you won't see long lectures. I take a more elementary approach to science because kids still come to high school from feeder schools without science programs."

I. ASSESSMENT PURPOSES

A. Diagnosing individual student needs

This teacher does not appear to do anything special to diagnose individual students needs or alter her curriculum plan based upon such information. She does use oral questions to determine student understanding and she adjusts her instructional pace based upon her observations and her review of their daily assignments. She gives 20-22 assignments a term (see I.C.) and she considers them generally to "get a picture of their weaknesses." She evaluates how they do the labs from this point of view: Are they failing to turn them in or failing to complete them? Is there a basic lack of understanding? She reinforces every concept twice (students complete a workbook along with the text) as a matter of course because her experience indicates that students need it. Her decisions about how much time students need in order to master the routines and her accommodation of the great variation of "abilities" appear to be rather firmly fixed.

She mentions that, "I do make allowances for outside factors. Some of these students come from terrible family situations and in the case of domestic violence, they may have to leave in the middle of the night. A student may say, 'We left our papers there.' I understand."

B. Diagnosing group needs

(See I.A. above for explanation)

C. Assigning grades

"The purpose of the grade is to tell me how many students understand the concepts being taught." Grades are an average of 22 assignments a term (i.e., homework, special projects, preparatory work, tests, quizzes, notebooks, extra credit assignments and effort) some of which are assigned points, others which are noted with marks in the grading book. Straight cut-off scores are used for the transformation: 90 percent = A, etc. However, the final grade is actually at the teacher's discretion because she considers effort and extra credit work heavily when a particular grade is borderline.

Homework is checked immediately and entered in the gradebook at the beginning of class. It must be received by 3:00 of the day it is due in order to receive credit. This ensures that the necessary laboratory materials are available and that the students will not forget the content under study.

At the beginning of the year, laboratory assignments are rated in terms of whether simple procedures are carried out. During the second quarter, she adds the ability to state a hypothesis to the rating process, and the third quarter she adds the ability to state the conclusion of the experiment. The lab procedures a student uses are important. Good ratings go to those who completed the lab, providing all steps and all information. The standard is that the procedure should be so clear that another person could follow: title, purpose, hypothesis, materials, procedure and results.

Students are required to keep notebooks, in which they collect weekly assigned vocabulary to be learned called "prep assignments," using main ideas, lab report, quizzes and drawings. These contribute to the grade.

The teacher gives extra credit assignments every week and borderline grades are affected by whether or not a student does extra credit work. "I don't use a formula in grading. Effort equals extra work and participation, such as coming in, bringing books to class, working together and doing the labs in class." She explains, "Mary had a 77 for the term. She earned a letter grade of B because she does the extra credit assignments, which indicate effort. Another student earned a 74 which should have been a C by straight recounting but he did no extra assignments so he got a D. Another student got a 66 which should have been a D but he got a C because he only did 2 extra credit assignments."

"I'd rather make a mistake with a student because of commission rather than omission. I try to give students every opportunity to demonstrate they are learning and trying. But if I see it's a game, I will call them aside and say, 'I won't accept this.' Some students try all kinds of things."

D. Grouping for instruction

This teacher does not group for instruction. She assists students to find partners during a laboratory but does not expect or require teamwork, nor does she acknowledge learning styles and peer factors as considerations in student choices. She simply hopes that students will be willing to do the work.

E. Identifying students for special services

Counselors have the responsibility for placing students in science courses. There had once been a department test which was given to determine placement but it was archaic and has since been discarded. The teacher does not seem to know on what basis placement is made.

F. Controlling and motivating students

The teacher views her students as generally difficult to motivate and keep on task. She believes they require constant direction and it is this view of her students which drives her instruction. Students in all the classes were at least compliant and orderly if not always focused upon the work at hand. On one particular day she pointed out that 6 out of 29 students turned in their assignments and that only 19 students were present. Why? "Because an assignment is due!," but she made no comment to students about this fact. While motivation is a constant issue for her, she infrequently uses assessment to motivate or control. She uses an occasional question to direct the wandering attention of a student, or to see what they knew about the material, but she does not call attention to student behavior or performance through a reference to grades, or assessment. She emphasized that she spent a great deal of time at the beginning of the year directing students, defining and communicating both academic and behavioral expectations. Late in the year she is simply playing out the script which she assumes students know. Whether or not students fully appreciated how she judged their effort for the grade is unknown.

G. Evaluating instruction

The evidence from observations and interviews suggests that this teachers barely makes significant adjustments in her instructional treatments based upon assessment data. She operates on the principle of reinforcing everything twice, so students have an additional workbook to complete on each topic along with the textbook and laboratory assignments. There is no evidence that she does this on the basis of special needs but rather on her experience with this general student population over time.

She commented that her first period General Biology class seemed slower than her other classes because they asked a lot of questions. She did not know whether it was the group dynamic or simply the "working out the kinks" in the instruction. When I did an analysis of her grade spread, I pointed out that in fact there were a greater number of A and B grades in her first period class then in her other General Biology sections. She was surprised at this finding and then surmised, "Perhaps that group is just more inquisitive." I conclude that she does not have specific evaluation strategies and does not ponder the success or failure of a particular instructional treatment.

H. Communicating achievement expectations

See I.A and I.C for additional explanation.

The teacher spends considerable time communicating what is expected. Her main goal in General Biology is to have 70 percent of her students write up labs correctly by third quarter. "The lab is already written down, (so it is a copying exercise) but the purpose isn't always stated, nor is the hypothesis or the conclusions. During the first quarter I really focus on this. By the final exam they have to write the procedure and they apply it to a problem I give."

She uses oral questions, lab sheets and tests to let students know what is expected of them. The sheer routine of the course reinforces what is important to do in order to learn biology. Each Monday she writes the assignments for the week on the board, with extra credit work included. This allows her better students to work ahead. But it also communicates to all what is expected.

I. Communicating affective expectations

The teacher spends considerable time at the beginning of the year and again at the start of each quarter reviewing the rules and expectations because she believes students need this constant reminder: Participation and effort are important and one should come to class prepared, with homework finished; completing the labs are important to student success. As noted above, this teacher occasionally uses oral questions to direct attention and communicate behavioral expectations. However, she also uses other nonverbal ways to communicate her approval, particularly as it related to student motivation and effort. Students who are involved in the instruction of the class are more likely to sit near the front of the room and she allows these students to dominate the student responses. Students who are uninvolved appeared to get less of her attention, even in lab time, although she always manages to get around to everyone at that time. In sum, those who express some effort get her attention as approval. Those who do not, get much less of her attention.

J. Test-taking experience

There is no evidence that the teacher provides practice in test-taking. She does, however, phase students into the writing of essays. During the first term, students take only multiple choice tests. But during the second term, when she feels they can handle it, she adds short essay questions.

II. ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

A. Assessment of achievement

1. Teacher-developed paper and pencil tests

The teacher indicated that she and her colleague wrote the end of the term test together and used the same teacher-developed quizzes. The teacher, however, was not able to produce any of her quizzes giving me the impression that the quizzes were a casual, hurried, assessment device.

2. Text-embedded tests

The teacher uses unit exams published along with the textbook. These parallel the student workbooks in content and format and match the cognitive levels of those activities which are generally recall, comprehension, and inference. While she does not examine the quality of these closely, the tests match the instructional objectives and are well designed.

3. Performance assessments

This teacher relies chiefly upon her observation of student products and interactions with students during labs and instruction to determine understanding of material. Keeping abreast of the regular assignments is her chief means of assessing performance. (See II.A.9. and I.C. for a full description.)

Laboratory assignments are checked carefully to be sure students followed the procedures. At the beginning of the year she uses a point system to evaluate completeness (see I.C. for explanation). But by the third quarter, lab reports are given a check for completing the lab and providing all steps and all information, or a plus for incomplete procedures. Zeroes mean that the lab assignment is unacceptable. Student laboratory work itself is not rated, and she keeps mental notes regarding student effort.

As noted earlier, notebooks are required. These are evaluated in terms of thoroughness, correctness, completeness and neatness. They are the compilation of all daily assignments, labs, drawings and tests. Homework assignments are simply checked as completed or uncompleted and duly noted in the gradebook.

4. Oral questioning strategies

When presenting or reviewing information, she generally uses an interactive mode of instruction. One gets the feeling, however, that she is operating on "auto pilot" when she is instructing the class because she seems to hurry through the lesson with little consciousness of what is occurring in terms of her questioning strategies. Analysis of interactions indicate that few students respond, usually the same ones and more often the male students. She will ask a student to come to the board and solve a problem. But she usually prods the student along or completes the problem for the students. She is quick to elicit the correct response and usually acknowledges a student response with an "OK." Little sustaining feedback is given. In interview she is quite aware of who does or does not talk. But for those students who choose to tune out in the back or the side of the room, there appears to be a distance between teacher and student during class instruction time. She will, however, take some time with those same students when the class is working individually.

5. Standardized tests

Prior to the observations, the students completed a published test in biology being given to California, Oregon and Washington students. The teacher secured the test from a colleague and knew only that the purpose of the test was to improve the instruction of biology. She wasn't sure what she was getting back but she participated in hopes that it could assist her instruction. She was very conscientious about having the students complete the follow-up questionnaire assessing their affective response to the test. Many of them indicated frustration, some confusion or boredom. The teacher was very accepting and nonjudgmental of their feelings. But it was clear that she has had little experience with standardized tests.

6. Group assessment methods

These are not used, and there is no information to suggest that the teacher is informed about such possibilities. She prefers to assess students individually. Students may work together in laboratory assignments but the efforts of each person is assessed individually which she considers a factor in "effort."

7. Opinions of other teachers

The teacher indicated that until the arrival of another female teacher in biology last year, she felt rather isolated and was slowly loosing incentive to stay innovative and fresh. She has genuine admiration for her new colleague and it is evident that they are working closely on course planning. I have no data to suggest how sensitive the teacher is to other teachers' opinions about students, however.

8. Assessment of reasoning skills

The teacher wants to know whether student "understand the material." Her questioning skills demonstrate understanding of higher order thinking skills. She often asks, "Why?" but her general reliance upon recall level activities indicate that she has limited strategies in this area. She recognizes that the ability to state hypotheses is central to science and works toward student achievement in this area. However, she feels that students have such poor study skills that this interferes with their success in reaching this level of thinking.

9. Regular assignments

Assignments for the week are posted on the board so that more capable students can work ahead. She always has extra credit assignments which are usually completed by her "A" students. Homework is regular and consists of doing "preparation work," completing laboratory assignments such as drawings, writing up the labs in the notebook or doing workbook activities. A workbook accompanies the text and duplicates the context for the purposes of reinforcement.

She relies heavily upon a review of homework to explore student learning. Assignments are checked in the first minutes of entry to class. She first notes who has completed assignments then she hands the homework back for a quick review and check. These are often written worksheets from the workbook.

11. Student peer ratings

There is no evidence that peer or self ratings are used or regarded as a viable assessment tool. Assessment is viewed as a highly individual matter directed by the teacher. Past experience with student indifference might deter her from considering such an approach, but given low student motivation, this might be a useful tool.

12. Student self ratings

See 11. above for explanation.

14. Strategies for integrating assessment and instruction

The daily review of homework, oral questioning of students, general observation of student effort on laboratory and extra credit work are the main ways the teacher integrates assessment and instruction. Given the products students must develop and the teacher's belief in the need to review and reinforce the material, assessment and instruction are well integrated in these classes.

15. Student cheating

This issue was not explored with the teacher.

B. Assessment of affect

1. Observing individual students

Although the teacher appears to ignore most student behavior that is off task, not too much misses her, based upon the interviews. She looks for effort and participation and rewards students who show such interest with her attention, her favorite form of positive feedback. (See I.I. for further explanation.)

When describing differences between students, she distinguishes between attitude and effort. John, an A student, not only gets work in ahead of time and typed neatly, but he stops by 7th period to ensure understanding of assignments and participates actively in class discussion. While verbal participation is an important indicator of participation, it is not always an accurate reflection of a student's understanding. "Greg is quiet thunder. He doesn't ask any questions but his assignments are always correct. He is an A student. I consider his background. He comes from a private Catholic school where it is quiet and respect is important. Matt on the other hand is quiet but is always concerned about time, when it's time to go. Labs are regularly incomplete. He doesn't ask questions. So it's hard to know whether he understands what he's supposed to do."

2. Observing group interaction

See II.B.1 for further explanation.

Students work together on certain labs but choose their own partners, unless partners interfer with the learning of others. If she sees that students are working alone when they should be working together she will physically assist a student to move to a group. Actively participating in a lab is considered a favorable indication of effort.

3. Using questionnaires

There is no indication that the teacher uses questionnaires or is informed about the advantages and limitations of their use.

4. Using interviews

Interviews are not used by this teacher. She does engage in informal conversations with students to gain an insight into their background. As the examples in I.A. and II.B.1. indicate, she uses such information to understand variations in student class participation and effort.

5. Opinions of other teachers

There is no evidence that this teacher seeks out or is interested in the opinions of other teachers. As noted in II.A.7. her new colleague is a welcome support and provides the insight and creativity she has been missing in her professional contact for some time. How this influences her perceptions of student affect is unknown.

6. Opinions of other students

There is no evidence that the teacher seeks opinions regarding student affect from other students.

7. Opinions of parents

She notes that the contact with parents is either non-existent or negative. When she implemented a weekly computerized feedback system to let parents know how students were doing the only reaction she got was, "Why are you doing this?" She concluded that it was not worth the time and effort. Parent opinion is now neither sought after nor regarded as productive for student performance.

8. Past student records

There is no evidence that this teacher uses past records of students.

9. Affective characteristics measured

Effort is the one characteristic which is tied to a particular indicator. Students who do extra credit work indicate their effort and motivation and are usually rewarded in the term grade. Because the teacher carries the weight of 17 years experience in a "difficult" high school, it appears that indicators of student interests, values, learning styles are ignored. As discussed above in I.A., she indicates sensitivity to students' family situation especially when she believes the student is sincere. The curriculum appears, however, to be quite rigid and rather impervious to student affective characteristics.

C. Assessment of ability

1. Meaning of ability

The teacher refers several times to "a wide range of abilities" in her General Biology classes; her Advanced Biology students are not the "cream of the crop." However, there appears to be a confusion as to whether ability is an innate cognitive factor or whether it refers to prior achievement. She will say, "Tom is bright; his parents had an education. Unfortunately, there is no way to accommodate him with such a wide range of abilities." At other times she refers to requisite skills needed to perform the task at hand such as the willingness to sustain effort or read at grade level and work independently. In this context she states that many of her students come from feeder schools which still do not have science programs or give homework, rendering some of them unable to work independently. For her, one of the characteristics of lower ability students is that they need to be directed constantly.

2. Decisions influenced by assessment of ability

The teacher describes her instructional strategy in the General Biology classes as fluctuating from accommodating the low end to the high end of the spectrum of ability so that all students will be reached at some time but I did not see how this was actualized. Instead I saw that she reinforces every topic twice with an additional workbook activity whether all students need to or not.

She admits that she makes no special provision for the Advanced Biology class except that they use a more difficult text.

D. Text assessments

The teacher relies heavily on the teacher edition of the text, for unit exams, activities and homework. Instruction follows the text and the students use an additional workbook which accompanies the text.

III. CRITERIA FOR SELECTING ASSESSMENT METHODS (A-K)

Criteria for selecting assessments were difficult to discern. [illegible] terms of tests, the teacher relies heavily upon the text publisher's tests. [illegible] constructs the final exam and until this year used only a multiple choice format partly because of poor student writing abilities. She is making a conscious effort to include more writing in the tests this year but phases the students into it slowly. It appears that she is doing this because of the writing across the curriculum efforts and because she sees value in it for her students.

Her unit tests indicate that she is minimally but adequately versed in test construction and that the kind of mental operations she fosters in her class are reflected in her test items. Most of her assessments are done through review of the regular assignments (see II.9. for further explanation) and are consistent with her purpose and match the content taught. I infer that efficiency is a factor in her assessment of these assignments. She is somewhat informed about these matters but these issues are not a primary concern for her in her teaching.

IV. QUALITY OF ASSESSMENTS

A. Paper and pencil assessments

Most of the items on the teacher made tests are recall and inference with some comparison. True/false and matching were the most common format found in both teacher made tests and text publisher's tests. Both kinds of tests matched the content and cognitive levels of instruction. Certainly the publisher's unit test was clearer in terms of directions and production. One teacher made final exam had typographical errors and repeated items. Overall, the tests were adequate in meeting the teacher's expectations which were to (1) indicate which students had "comprehended" the material, and (2) assist in assigning grades for the term.

B. Performance assessments

The format for writing the laboratory reports is rather typical for the discipline (see I.C. for explanation), but her standards of thoroughness, neatness, and completeness emphasize correctness and neatness over creativity and conceptual understanding. Students know the conditions for acceptable homework and, as with the laboratory reports, these are conveyed repeatedly through verbal rather than written instructions or examples. Effort and participation are defined as, "coming to class with books, homework, completing laboratories, participating in class discussion and doing the extra credit assignments." Overall, performance criteria are vague.

C. Oral questions

See II.C. for description.

V. FEEDBACK PROCEDURES

A. Oral and nonverbal feedback

The evidence from observation indicates that this teacher attends to the stronger, more able student. In interview she never pointed out an able female student. Her style of instruction allows for students who are willing to dominate the class question/answer exchanges. She calls upon students but boys tend to be the ones to call out unsolicited answers, thus trying to control the verbal exchanges. She seemed to accept this.

She is very quick to "move in" on an incorrect response but is just as likely to respond with, "OK," to either a correct or incorrect response. Her manner indicates a concern for correctness and she might impatiently ask a student, "Why are you doing it that way?"

On two separate occasions she reprimanded female students. One handed in the homework after the due date and the teacher publically chastised her with, "You know better than that by this time of the year." She was obviously irritated by the student. On another occasion she registered obvious distain for the rather defiant posture of one female student dressed in punk attire. I did not observe her being as harsh on the male students.

While students are working on laboratory assignments or homework she is quite accessible. She will respond to anyone who requests her and checks on those who are drifting off. Those who sit in the front of the room tend to be the more active students and they receive more of her feedback then those who sit in the back of the room. It appears that by April she knows who is a good student and who is hopeless and she appears to be more responsive both verbally and nonverbally to those who are able and willing.

B. Written feedback

The teacher has always used some system to record grades so that students know where they stand. Originally she posted assignments and quiz records on the wall. She put a check mark if the assignment and quiz were done. Test grades were not posted because that information is private. Two years ago she started a computer system to provide a weekly print out of grades but the students "weren't ready for it. It was too frustrating to many. Some kids wanted to always know where they stood but for the majority it didn't make a difference. Parents signed it once a week and every 4 weeks I sent a letter home on the computer to the parents. Only one parent ever wrote back and it was negative. It was so much work. I concluded that I'm too accommodating. Now I use a new system, a typed form for student recordkeeping. Those who want to can keep track of how they are doing. It is not required. Only a few use it but it is their choice."

The teacher selected the notebook of her best students to illustrate student work. Few written comments were noted. By this time of the year students are simply receiving a check, plus or zero for their laboratory procedures which must include all the steps. Homework is handled in a similar manner. It is the student's responsibility to correct the written work if it is done inadequately but sometimes she does add written corrections. She is not likely to write comments at this juncture of the year. She still looks to the homework to indicate student weaknesses or misunderstandings but she is more likely to respond to these through instructional review with the whole class. In general, very little written feedback is given.

VI. DESCRIPTION OF TEACHER AND ASSESSMENT

B. Teacher's expenditure of time

1. Time spent in teaching activities

Most of her time is spent in group instruction; least is spent in assessment-related activities. It is difficult to judge how much time this teacher actually spends in planning. Biology requires a certain amount of set up time but it appears that the textbook drives the course. Several times in her presentations, she seemed insufficiently prepared in the science area and twice students corrected her misinformation. Her openness to the new ideas of her colleague and willingness to coordinate the biology program more carefully with her indicates that she may be doing more now than in the recent past.

2. Time spent in assessment activities

This teacher spends most of the assessment time on regular assignments, scoring, recording and providing feedback in terms of instruction. The text publisher's tests are simply administered without much review and the teacher's quizzes are constructed rather quickly. It is likely that the same term exam is given from year to year. In short, the assessment process is established and receives little attention.

C. Teacher characteristics

This teacher seems to genuinely like students as she appears to like people. Seventeen years in a setting with little perceived support and a student population known for learning difficulties has not negatively affected her sense of professional efficacy. Within a narrowly defined concept of science education she takes pride in the fact that she is considered a demanding teacher but she leaves the observer with the feeling of a teacher who is operating on auto control during instruction. The interpersonal environment of the classroom regarding assessment, is best characterized as neither cooperative nor competitive, rather, highly individualistic, with students appearing indifferent and unresponsive to each other. Whether the teacher views this as proper climate or whether she feels powerless to change the situation is unknown. However, the positive potential of student peer relationships may be a rich and useful strategy for her to develop, given the motivational needs of the students.

She makes her decisions based upon her years of experience and this tends to reinforce a stereotypic view of student capabilities. The net result is to constraint student opportunities rather than expand them. For example, a "misplaced" student once turned on the gas jets and lit a match, endangering the students. Another time, with a substitute teacher in charge, the students threw out the frogs for dissection. She now simply avoids activities which might be risky, costly or create management problems.

VII. TEACHER'S PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

The first thing the teacher told me was "There is such a wide range of abilities in these classes that there is no way I can accommodate the bright student." The teacher believes that the nature of her student population seriously affects what she can accomplish with them, and for the most part, variation within the student population on these characteristics is ignored.

An analysis of her grade distribution for two terms indicates that there is little change in an individual's grade over the course of the year. Only a few students move a grade either way. Indeed, one-fourth of her General Biology classes receive D's and F's. On the one hand she mentions that every student failure is her own failure as a teacher, but the evidence suggests that she attributes more to student prior achievement and level of motivation than to her own ability to intervene. There is little evidence that there are changes in students characteristics as the year unfolds.

Her strongest comments about her feelings about her students came in response to questions about parental expectations. These expectations have either been nonexistent or negative and thus have had the effect of frustrating her or wearing down her commitment and energy.

VIII. ASSESSMENT POLICY

Because of interview constraints, detailed information regarding her knowledge of district and school assessment policy was not obtained. But this teacher has been teaching in the same district and school for seventeen years and knows the basic ground rules. Her assessment practices are within the scope of commonly accepted teacher practice. She reports attendance and keeps track of absences and tardiness which do affect a student's grade. I do not know if the school has a homework policy but her practice of requiring homework to be turned in on the day it is due seems consistent with other teachers' practice in the district. She is aware of and influenced by district specified policies regarding content to be covered, indeed, she feels constrained by the district-mandated textbook she uses for General Biology. Both she and her colleague believe that it is a poorly written bok with many misspelled words and misinformation. But she continues to use it despite her objections.

PROFILE OF BIOLOGY CASE #2

I. ASSESSMENT PURPOSES

A. Diagnosing individual student needs	Uninformed			X			Well informed
	Irrelevant					X	Relevant
	Useless					X	Useful
	Not used			X			Used frequently
B. Diagnosing group needs	Uninformed			X			Well informed
	Irrelevant				X		Relevant
	Useless				X		Useful
	Not used		X				Used frequently
C. Assigning grades	Uninformed				X		Well informed
	Irrelevant				X		Relevant
	Useless				X		Useful
	Not used				X		Used frequently
D. Grouping for instruction within class	Uninformed		X				Well informed
	Irrelevant			X			Relevant
	Useless	X					Useful
	Not used	X					Used frequently
E. Identifying students for special services	Uninformed		X				Well informed
	Irrelevant		X				Relevant
	Useless		X				Useful
	Not used	X					Used frequently
F. Controlling and motivating students	Uninformed			X			Well informed
	Irrelevant				X		Relevant
	Useless				X		Useful
	Not used		X				Used frequently
G. Evaluating instruction	Uninformed	X					Well informed
	Irrelevant					X	Relevant
	Useless			X			Useful
	Not used			X			Used frequently
H. Communicating achievement expectations	Uninformed			X			Well informed
	Irrelevant					X	Relevant
	Useless					X	Useful
	Not used				X		Used frequently

I. Communicating affective expectations	Uninformed			X			Well informed
	Irrelevant					X	Relevant
	Useless					X	Useful
	Not used			X			Used frequently
J. Providing test-taking experience	Uninformed			X			Well informed
	Irrelevant				X		Relevant
	Useless				X		Useful
	Not used			X			Used frequently

K. Relative importance of purposes

Given "100 importance points" to distribute across the purposes listed below, how would you distribute those points to reflect the relative importance of the decisions listed?

Diagnosing individual needs	
Diagnosing group needs	
Assigning grades	50
Grouping for instruction	
Identifying students for special services	
Controlling and motivating	20
Evaluating instruction	
Communicating achievement expectations	15
Communicating affective expectations	10
Test taking experience	5
	100 points

II. ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

A. Assessment of Achievement

1. Teacher-developed paper and pencil tests and quizzes	Uninformed		X				Well informed
	Inappropriate			X			Appropriate
	Useless			X			Useful
	Not used		X				Used frequently
2. Text-embedded paper and pencil tests and quizzes	Uninformed		No info				Well informed
	Inappropriate			X			Appropriate
	Useless			X			Useful
	Not used					X	Used frequently
3. Performance assessments	Uninformed		No info				Well informed
	Inappropriate					X	Appropriate
	Useless					X	Useful
	Not used				X		Used frequently
4. Oral questioning strategies	Uninformed		X				Well informed
	Inappropriate					X	Appropriate
	Useless					X	Useful
	Not used			X			Used frequently
5. Standardized tests	Uninformed		X				Well informed
	Inappropriate	X					Appropriate
	Useless	X					Useful
	Not used	X					Used frequently
6. Group assessment methods	Uninformed		No info				Well informed
	Inappropriate				X		Appropriate
	Useless				X		Useful
	Not used	X					Used frequently
7. Opinions of other teachers	Uninformed		No info				Well informed
	Inappropriate			X			Appropriate
	Useless		No info				Useful
	Not used		No info				Used frequently
8. Assessment of reasoning skills	Uninformed		X				Well informed
	Inappropriate					X	Appropriate
	Useless					X	Useful
	Not used		X				Used frequently

9. Regular assignments

Uninformed					X	Well informed
Inappropriate					X	Appropriate
Useless					X	Useful
Not used					X	Used frequently

10. Student peer rating

Uninformed		No info				Well informed
Inappropriate			X			Appropriate
Useless			X			Useful
Not used	X					Used frequently

11. Student self ratings

Uninformed		No info				Well informed
Inappropriate				X		Appropriate
Useless				X		Useful
Not used	X					Used frequently

12. Proportion of all assessments for all purposes that are of various types

Teacher-developed paper and pencil tests	5
Text-embedded paper and pencil tests	40
Performance assessments	0
Oral questions	15
Standardized tests	0
Opinions of other teachers	0
Regular assignments	40
Group assessments	0
Student peer ratings	0
Student self ratings	0
	100%

13. Cognitive levels of questions posed in:

	Study and Discussion Questions	Oral Questions	Tests and Quizzes
Recall	50%	50%	60%
Analysis	--	20%	15%
Comparison	40%	20%	20%
Inference	10%	10%	5%
Evaluation	--	--	--

14. Strategies for integrating assessment and instruction	Uninformed			X			Well informed
	Inappropriate					X	Appropriate
	Useless					X	Useful
	Not used			X			Used frequently
15. Dealing with cheating	Uninformed		No info				Well informed
	Inappropriate					X	Appropriate
	Useless					X	Useful
	Not used		No info				Used frequently

B. Assessment of Affect

1. Observing individual students	Uninformed			X			Well informed
	Inappropriate					X	Appropriate
	Useless					X	Useful
	Not used			X			Used frequently
2. Observing group interactions	Uninformed			X			Well informed
	Inappropriate					X	Appropriate
	Useless					X	Useful
	Not used			X			Used frequently
3. Using questionnaires	Uninformed		No info				Well informed
	Inappropriate			X			Appropriate
	Useless			X			Useful
	Not used		No info				Used frequently
4. Using interviews (formal and informal)	Uninformed		No info				Well informed
	Inappropriate				X		Appropriate
	Useless				X		Useful
	Not used		No info				Used frequently
5. Opinions of other teachers	Uninformed		No info				Well informed
	Inappropriate				X		Appropriate
	Useless				X		Useful
	Not used		No info				Used frequently
6. Opinions of other students	Uninformed		No info				Well informed
	Inappropriate				X		Appropriate
	Useless				X		Useful
	Not used		No info				Used frequently

7. Opinions of parents

	Uninformed			X			Well informed
	Inappropriate			X			Appropriate
	Useless			X			Useful
	Not used	X					Used frequently

8. Past student records

	Uninformed		No info				Well informed
	Inappropriate				X		Appropriate
	Useless				X		Useful
	Not used		No info				Used frequently

9. Checklist of affective characteristics measured:

I Seriousness of purpose
I Motivation and effort
I Attitude
____ Learning style
____ Interests
____ Values
____ Preferences
____ Academic self-concept
____ Locus of control
____ Anxiety
____ Maturity
____ Social skills
____ Study skills
I Other (specify: Family situation)

Code:
F = formal assessment conducted
I = informal assessment conducted

10. Relative importance of affective assessment methods:

Observing individual students	90
Observing group interactions	10
Using questionnaires	
Using interviews (formal and informal)	
Opinions of other teachers	
Opinions of other students	
Opinions of parents	
Past student records	
	100%

C. Assessment of Ability

1. Meaning of ability for teacher

Value of this factor for the teacher	Important			X			Unimportant

Measurement of ability

Measured formally _____
Measured informally _____
Not measured __X__

Ingredients considered in assessment of ability, if measured:

FACTOR(S) INCLUDED IN ASSESSMENT	MEASURED HOW?
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

2. Check decisions influenced by results (i.e., change with varying levels of ability).

_____ Instructional objectives
_____ Instructional strategies
_____ Grouping for instruction (within class)
_____ Methods for measuring achievement
_____ Grading standards
_____ Students selected for special services
_____ Other (specify ____)

D. Text Assessments

Checklist of assessment components provided with text

Available	Used	
X	X	Oral questions for class use
X	X	Homework assignments
X		General assessment guidelines for teachers
X	X	Paper and pencil tests
no		Performance assessments
no		Scoring guidelines
no		Quality control guidelines
		Other (specify ________________________________)

III. CRITERIA FOR SELECTING ASSESSMENT METHODS

A. Results fit purpose	Uninformed			X			Well informed
	Unimportant			X			Important
	Not used			X			Used frequently
B. Method matches material taught	Uninformed			X			Well informed
	Unimportant				X		Important
	Not used				X		Used frequently
C. Ease of development	Uninformed			X			Well informed
	Unimportant				X		Important
	Not used				X		Used frequently
D. Ease of scoring	Uninformed			X			Well informed
	Unimportant				X		Important
	Not used				X		Used frequently
E. Origin of assessment	Uninformed		X				Well informed
	Unimportant			X			Important
	Not used		X				Used frequently
F. Time required to administer	Uninformed			X			Well informed
	Unimportant				X		Important
	Not used				X		Used frequently
G. Degree of objectivity	Uninformed			X			Well informed
	Unimportant				X		Important
	Not used				X		Used frequently
H. Applicability to measuring thinking skills	Uninformed			X			Well informed
	Unimportant			X			Important
	Not used			X			Used frequently
I. Effective control of cheating	Uninformed		No info				Well informed
	Unimportant		No info				Important
	Not used		No info				Used frequently

J. Relative importance of criteria

Results fit purpose	10
Method matches material taught	20
Ease of development	20
Ease of scoring	20
Origin of assessment	
Time required to administer	
Degree of objectivity	20
Applicability to measuring thinking skills	10
Effective control of cheating	
	100%

IV. QUALITY OF ASSESSMENTS

A. Percent of paper and pencil assessments (teacher-developed or text-embedded) having the following characteristics (need not total 100%):

%	
0	Clear description of assessment specifications
100	Matches content of instruction
100	Matches cognitive levels of instruction
No info	Minimizes time required to gather needed information
60	Item format matches desired outcome
80	Items clearly written
70	Items sample domain
No info	Scoring procedures planned
0	Scoring criteria written for essays
50	Clear directions
60	High quality reproduction
No info	Test scheduled to minimize distractions

B. Percent of performance assessments having the following characteristics:

%	
0	Clear description of trait to be measured with levels of proficiency articulated
60	Matches intended outcomes of instruction
60	Minimizes time required to gather needed information
30	Clear performance criteria
60	Students aware of criteria
0	Thoughtful exercises yield performance samples
	Exercises sample performance domain
0	Performance rating planned
50	Results match information needs

C. Percent of oral questions having the following characteristics:

%	
	Sampling methods cover range of achievement levels of students
20	Strategies involve everyone
30	Teacher waits for response
20	Student's response given supportive reaction
60	Questions match cognitive levels of instruction
	Written performance records maintained

V. FEEDBACK PROCEDURES

A. For oral and nonverbal feedback

Percent of feedback delivered to students who are:

%
70 Strong (vs. weak)
70 Correct (vs. incorrect)
70 Male (vs. female)

Percent of feedback having the following characteristics:

%
70 Delivered in class (vs. out of class)
70 Oral (vs. nonverbal)
50 Public (vs. private)
90 Fair (vs. unfair)
70 Focused on achievement (vs. affect)
90 Germane (vs. irrelevant)
90 Immediate (vs. delayed)
70 Positive (vs. negative)

B. For written feedback

Percent of feedback delivered to students who are:

%
50 Strong (vs. weak)
20 Correct (vs. incorrect)
No info Male (vs. female)

Percent of feedback having the following characteristics:

%
10 Comment (vs. symbol)
30 Positive (vs. negative)
70 Fair (vs. unfair)
100 Germane (vs. irrelevant)
90 Focused on achievement (vs. affect)

Uses samples of performance as feedback — Never _X_ ___ ___ ___ ___ Frequently

Uses public achievement chart as feedback — Never ___ ___ _X_ ___ ___ Frequently

VI. DESCRIPTION OF TEACHER AND ASSESSMENT

A. Teacher's background

1. Teacher experience, number of years:

17 Overall
17 At grade level
17 In school
17 With content

2. Relative contributions of various sources to teacher's knowledge of assessment methodology

%
20 Teacher preparation training
___ Inservice training
20 Ideas and suggestions of colleagues
___ Professional literature
20 Teacher's guide to textbooks
40 Own experience in classroom
100%

B. Teacher's expenditure of time

1. Proportion of time spent in teaching activities

%
20 Planning
20 Teaching (one on one)
50 Teaching (group)
10 Assessing (see list below)
___ Other (specify ______________________________)
100%

2. Proportion of time spent in assessment activities (paper and pencil, performance assessment, oral, assignments)

%
5 Reviewing and selecting assessments
10 Developing own assessments
5 Administering
60 Scoring and recording
20 Providing feedback
___ Evaluating quality
100%

C. Teacher characteristics

Role in the classroom — Curriculum maker and presenter ___ ___ X ___ ___ Servant of policy delivering required content

Expectations of professional self	Expects little		X				Expects a great deal
Structure needs	Rigid		X				Flexible
View of high quality performance	Correctness demanded	X					Degrees of quality eval.
Stereotypic view of students	None				X		Expressed often
Attends to exceptional student	Never			X			Frequently
Sense of performance norms	Unclear			X			Very clear
Orientation to experimentation	No risks	X					Risk taker
Orientation to cheating	No concern		No	info			Major concern
Amount of cheating	None		No	info			A great deal
Value of promptness; importance of timely work completion	Unimportant					X	Important

Interpersonal environment of the classroom regarding assessment:

Cooperative	None		X				Frequent
Competitive	None	X					Frequent

Attributions for reasons of student success/failure:

70 Due to student
30 Due to teacher
100%

Basis for grading students:

____ Sense of ability
100 Demonstrated achievement
100%

Interpretation of assessment:

____ Norm-referenced
100 Criterion-referenced
100%

VII. TEACHER'S PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

A. Ability to learn	Low			X			High
	No variation					X	Great deal
	Variation ignored		X				Addressed
B. Willingness to learn	Low		X				High
	No variation					X	Great deal
	Variation ignored			X			Addressed
C. Rate of achievement	Low		X				High
	Decreasing			X			Increasing
	No variation					X	Great deal
	Variation ignored		X				Addressed
D. Maturity	Irresponsible		X				Responsible
	No variation					X	Great deal
	Variation ignored			X			Addressed
E. Study skills	Undeveloped		X				Developed
	No variation				X		Great deal
	Variation ignored			X			Addressed
F. Social skills	Undeveloped			X			Developed
	No variation			X			Great deal
	Variation ignored			X			Addressed
G. Willingness to perform	Reticent		X				Willing
	No variation					X	Great deal
	Variation ignored			X			Addressed
H. Feedback needs	Weak		X				Strong
	No variation				X		Great deal
	Variation ignored		X				Addressed
I. Self-assessment skills	Undeveloped		X				Developed
	No variation				X		Great deal
	Variation ignored		X				Addressed

J. Sense of fairness	Unclear		X				Clear
	No variation			X			Great deal
	Variation ignored		X				Addressed
K. Reaction to testing	Tranquil		No info				Anxious
	No variation				X		Great deal
	Variation ignored		X				Addressed
L. Parental expectations	Unclear			X			Clear
	Low		X				High
	Unimportant			X			Important
	No variation			X			Great deal
	Variation ignored			X			Addressed

VIII. ASSESSMENT POLICY

(See attached table)

VIII. What policies influence classroom assessment?

FOCUS OF POLICY	ORIGINS OF POLICY					
	Federal	State	District	School	Department	Collegial
Testing	A. Does a standard exist? B. Does teacher know standard? C. Does it impact practice? How?	A. no B. n/a C. n/a	A. no B. no info C. no		A. no info B. no info C. no info	A. yes B. yes C. yes, all testing & planning is now done in cooperation with the new biology teacher
Reporting	A. no B. n/a C. n/a		A. yes B. yes C. teacher follows guidelines	A. yes B. yes C. teacher follows practice	A. no info B. no info C. no info	
Homework			A. no info B. no info C. no info	A. no info B. no info C. no info	A. no info B. no info C. no info	A. yes B. yes C. homework due by 3:00 pm every day
Class Size			A. yes B. yes C. class size within limits	yes yes class size within limits		
Selection Spec. Prog. and/or Recognition	A. no info B. no info C. no info	A. no B. no C. no	A. no info B. no info C. no info			
Attendance			A. yes B. yes C. teacher follows guidelines			A. no info B. no info C. no info
Content to Be Taught (Inc. Text Selection)			A. yes B. yes C. teacher uses the text selected by district	A. no info B. no info C. no info	A. no info B. no info C. no info	A. yes B. yes C. see above

LANGUAGE ARTS CASE STUDY #1

Background Information

This English teacher teaches literature and composition at a 4-year high school in a working class neighborhood where few students are expected to continue on to 4-year colleges. The neighborhood has a large minority population (Black and Southeast Asian) which is reflected in the school's student body.

This teacher teaches five classes per day: American Literature (25 students, mainly sophomores); two classes of Advanced Composition (17 and 13 students, respectively, mainly juniors); Advanced American Literature (22 students); and Advanced Senior English (26 students). There are seven periods in the school day, the seventh being considered a period for students to consult with teachers and/or make up tests or assignments. This teacher has one additional free period a day. She is also the advisor for the school's National Honor Society chapter (which, she notes, is quite small).

The students in this teacher's classes are primarily white. Her American Literature class has the highest minority enrollment, about 30% (Black, Hispanic and Southeast Asian). Girls outnumber boys in all but one of her classes, and in Senior English the ratio is two girls per boy.

I. ASSESSMENT PURPOSES

This teacher states that she uses assessment for various purposes: (1) at first to get an "estimate of the house"--to see what she's got and what she can expect of individual students; (2) to teach ideas and concepts, particularly to identify or recognize any sparks and be able to encourage them; (3) to measure what the students have learned; and, on the "upper end" of the spectrum, (4) to measure what they've done with what they've learned, that is, how it has changed their thinking.

A. Diagnosing individual student needs

Sizing up: At the beginning of the year, the teacher collects a writing sample from the students. The sample, which is never returned, is used by the teacher for several purposes: to see if the student is properly placed; to identify any troubled students (the content); and to get an idea of the student's power over the language, as a baseline for later concerns regarding plagiarism.

Throughout the course of the semester, the teacher uses oral questions in class, regular assignments and tests to monitor individual students' progress and particular problems. This teacher seems to give considerable attention to individual needs. She likes to have students work on assignments in class so that she can observe and be available to individuals as they need help. In her literature classes, although the emphasis is not on grammar, she usually takes time to mark grammatical or spelling errors (but does not grade them--she used to, see C. below) and if a number of students are having the same problem she will adjust her teaching plan to clarify the point of grammar in question.

B. Diagnosing group needs

In general, this teacher seems very accustomed to diagnosing and assessing. During our conversations she was always judging, comparing these classes to other classes she'd had, to other years, to the other school where she taught previously. I had difficulty getting a clear view of how she does it. It seems that a lot of it is in her head, based on her many years of experience (20). She does, however, use concrete forms of assessment to help her form her judgments.

She commonly uses oral questions to determine where the group is on the assignment (re completion and understanding). Similarly, she uses the results of written assignments and tests to identify the group's need for further clarification or emphasis on a particular topic.

C. Assigning grades

This teacher would prefer not to give grades if it were possible. She remarks, "Who cares about specific grades? What is important is to be successful and get some learning." On another occasion she exclaimed, "I don't remember what grades I got in high school. Who cares?" (However, she doesn't deny the utility of grades for getting into college.) She tells her students that she would be happy to give everyone A's if they did the work--you don't have to be brilliant to do well in her classes. Her grading system is based on points, mainly because she feels it is easier for the students to see where they are and what they need to make up. Also, with the point system there is no quibbling about an A- or a B+ along the way. She does, however, given an occasional plus or minus final grade. Final grades in a course are based on a percent of total points achieved:

88 - 100 = A
78 - 87 = B
68 - 77 = C
50 - 67 = D
Below 50 = F

Points on individual assignments and tests--which are mainly short answers and essays--are given based on how the group does, that is, they are norm-referenced, rather than criterion-referenced. In fact, she cited an instance when a class hadn't done well on an objective test (the highest grade was 38 out of 50) and she had decided to toss it out completely (after making sure that no one would be hurt by that decision).

In her literature classes she used to grade all writing on two levels, content and technical quality. The content or substance grade was the most important. A student could get an A in the class if she brought her technical level to a B, for example. But the teacher no longer grades on technical quality (unless the course is focused on composition or grammar). However, she continues to mark technical mistakes and may even take time out from literary instruction to teach a point of grammar when the error is common across a number of students. Why she decided not to grade the technical aspects of English is a little unclear. In part it seems to have been a decision based on efficient use of her time and energy.

This teacher really seems to de-emphasize grades. She doesn't state the number of points a question or an assignment is worth unless students press her on it, and even then she may be rather vague, saying "Oh, I don't know, what do you think? At least about the same as the last one." Assignments and tests are returned with number of points over total number possible. Occasionally a student will ask, "Is that an A?" and she will mentally calculate it in her head on the spot.

She notes having had particular difficulty with the grades for her regular (as opposed to Advanced) American Literature class last quarter. This is one of the lowest level classes she has taught. They do very little. For the first time in 20 years she finds that her gradebook is nothing but a series of "messages." She notes that she is glad that the third quarter grades were merely "advisory" because she was very dissatisfied with how they turned out. She feels they did not reflect the students' abilities or how hard they worked. She's not sure how she will handle it this quarter, but she is considering throwing out the grades and starting over, using the top students as a standard. She notes that attendance (presence in class) was "totally chaotic," that is, students attended very erratically. She wants to figure out a system that will encourage and reward attendance and that will be fair, the implication being that fair equals a reflection of effort as well as quality. (I never quite understood what she meant, even though I probed on a different occasion--she was perturbed by her grading of this class but didn't explain the problem(s). According to the gradebook, there were far more F's in this class than in any other.)

D. Grouping for instruction within class

She generally teaches her classes as a group. However, she allows for considerable differentiation in individual pace. Exceptional students who complete their work on time (or early) are sometimes allowed to do other work for other classes or are given special assignments, such as additional readings. She is willing to take time to meet with them to discuss such work, either while the other students are working on an assignment in class or during her free period or the 7th period. For example, in the Senior English class, two girls were interested in doing additional reading that would help them prepare for college, so she arranged to discuss Candide with them and a girlfriend of theirs who was already attending college. Similarly, a Stanford-bound boy in that class followed up on her suggestions regarding additional readings when they were working on satire. In her Advanced American Literature class she has allowed for considerable individuality of interests by allowing students to choose from five different novels; she has small groups of students reading these novels simultaneously (and must keep up herself with all of them). And even within those groups she has found that students are progressing at such different paces, despite her suggested reading assignments, that she has decided to allow some groups to break into two for discussion. (See G. below for more regarding pacing.)

E. Identifying students for special services

She has had about a dozen mainstreamed kids in the last 2 years, identified as such by the administration prior to inclusion in her classes. (Her main complaint about mainstreamed kids was administrative--too much paperwork is required of her to report back to the Special Ed. Dept.) She noted that she recently found out that a particular student was mainstreamed. They hadn't notified her. She said it had been clear to her that the girl couldn't do high level work, but she was pleasant, worked very hard and turned everything in. She gave her a B last quarter. She recently saw her overall GPA and was surprised to see that it was a 3.5, but knew that something was wrong, that they must not have been high level classes. Nevertheless, she concludes that the girl will function okay.

She also gave the example of a girl who she determined had been placed wrong. She was in the Advanced American Literature course and it really wasn't fair, because she was doing perfectly acceptable work for the "regular" American Literature class and would have received a better grade for her work if she had been properly placed there. The teacher managed to get the girl's grade changed to reflect what it would have been had she been placed correctly. She notes that she's not sure if she could write them down, but she does have parameters within which she expects a class to fall, and each group varies within those (if students are properly placed). Once in a while someone is "all alone way beyond" and then she tries to give that student the extra stimulation he or she needs (see above).

F. Controlling and motivating students

The students in these classes require constant monitoring and regular reprimands for their behavior in class. This teacher prefers to deal with problem behavior nonverbally (and indeed would prefer not to have to deal with it at all!)--using a glare or a pause--but finds herself compelled to use other more overt methods to control and motivate the majority of her students. In general she tolerates considerable "off-task" behavior in her classes. (The extreme case was one day in Senior English when two girls were allowed to work out in the halls because they could concentrate better there than in the classroom!) However, she and the students have come to know each other by this time of year and have established certain limits beyond which the students will not go. The students respect her and there is an undercurrent of humor and even affection between teacher and students. Her subtle sarcasm is not wasted on them, and even when they appear not to respond to her direct reprimands, they eventually settle down to work (if only for brief periods of time).

She does use various assessment methods to control and motivate students, however. She sometimes targets oral questions at students who are obviously not paying attention, particularly if they are becoming loud and obtrusive. She noted that she occasionally uses a quiz "to wake them up" and get them on task (I saw this only once, in one class at the very beginning of the class period).

On numerous occasions the teacher remarked that students at this school need to have everything broken down and graded (as compared to the other school at which she taught). Getting points for the work seems to be a motivator for these students. I observed several instances where she overtly used the award of points to control or motivate kids. In one of the Advanced Composition classes, a boy didn't want to do the essay part of the assignment because he said it was too hard. The teacher responded that is was "half the points" and he immediately said, "Okay, I'll do it." She went on to look over the rest of his paper and encourage him regarding how easy it would be and noted that it was worth 20 points. In Advanced American Literature she reminded the class that despite the fact that people were now reading different novels they would all get points for the first parts of two novels they had read together in class as long as they completed the assignments on them. Also in that class in one of her more exasperated outbursts, she threatened to give 0's for every day that students didn't bring their books to class and have something to do.

G. Evaluating instruction

This teacher is very tuned into pacing her instruction to ensure that what is being presented is appropriate and meaningful for the students so that learning takes place. Consequently, she is constantly adjusting, checking progress, revising timelines, reteaching when something isn't clear or they just didn't get it, or simply doing the assignment over together in class. She determines the need for this based on various types of assessments--oral questions in class, homework and class-time assignments, and tests. For example, by looking at the assignments being turned in she decided that both of the Advanced Composition classes were having difficulty with the passive voice (the subject of the assignment). Students were on-task and putting a lot of effort into their work, but they just weren't getting it. So she decided to spend more class time on it. (She felt it necessary to encourage them by saying that she would give them credit for what they'd done and then help them improve it.)

There were also many times when she adjusted the pace of her lesson plan to fit the progress of the majority of the class. This seemed to occur a lot (because many students hadn't done the work at home). This may have been detrimental to students who were conscientious about the assigned work. In some cases she did try to give those students added stimulation, but clearly needed to move the group along more or less together, despite the potential for boredom on the part of some. (See VI.C. Timeliness, for more on this.)

Perhaps the clearest indication that she uses assessment to evaluate instruction (and achievement, of course) occurs when she postpones a test if the students aren't ready to take it. This happened in the Advanced Composition classes (when she found she needed to reteach before they were ready for the test over the chapter) and in the Advanced American Literature class, when small groups of students did not complete their readings as quickly as anticipated and she put off the test until they were ready.

H. Communicating achievement expectations

In a sense, all types of academic assessments communicate achievement expectations, whether the teacher overtly intends them to or not. The nature of a teacher's oral questions, study questions and assignments, and tests--all give students clues about what is expected of them. I saw very little overt use of assessment to communicate achievement expectations. Once she said "You'll need to know this for the test." There was, however, one very clear example of assessment used in this way. The teacher told me about a test on MacBeth she had given in the Advanced Senior English class during the first half of the year on which everyone did so poorly that they were devastated. There was one A and 14 D's. It was clear to her that they hadn't studied enough. So she decided to give them a second chance to prepare. She wrote another test, the students studied very hard, and the results were much better. They knew what was expected of them.

I. Communicating affective expectations

As noted in F. above, this teacher prefers to use nonverbal ways to communicate affective expectations. However, she does use oral question targeting to control or draw attention to unacceptable behavior. She also uses oral or written comments and grades to reward acceptable behavior (beyond the quality of the work). For example, I saw several papers where she had made an encouraging comment to a student who had obviously not participated regularly in the past. For example, "I hope this is a sign that you are going to begin to participate, (name)," or "This is so well done that it would be a pleasure to have you here each day, (name). Can you manage to join us?" In class she might orally reward a student who had previously been off task by noting that he or she had finished or had a good answer.

J. Providing test-taking experience

Other than initial tests in a new class which allow students to get to know the teacher and her expectations (and which I did not observe), the only time this teacher used assessment for this purpose was in her two Advanced

Composition classes when she gave them the Simulated Test of Standard Written English (TSWE) and then went over it in class as a way of preparing them for one segment of the SAT, which some would take in the future. (The TSWE is taken from Improving College Admission Test Scores--To Develop Cognitive Skills and Test Familiarity. Verbal Workbook.)

K. (See form)

Additional Comments

Another purpose of assessment--not on our list--for this teacher is accountability. Although she has very little contact with parents at this school (especially compared to the previous school where she taught), she remarked that she keeps a column in her gradebook for class participation/reading aloud (etc.), mainly for the benefit of parents and administrators (but implied in this was that she used this assessment herself but did not need the concrete scores for her own ratings as much as to justify grades to parents and administators...).

Teaching thinking (or reasoning) skills was another assessment purpose that arose from discussions with this teacher. She uses assessment to teach kids to think and pull things together--particularly in essay tests or assignments. She often does open book essay tests in which she'll even help students find a particular spot in the book if they whisper the content but just can't find the place, because she is primarily interested in having them learn to use ideas and present them coherently.

II. ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

A. Assessment of achievement

1. Teacher-developed paper and pencil tests and quizzes

This teacher prefers to develop her own tests and quizzes, particularly for her literature classes. When asked if her training had prepared her for the kinds of assessments she does in her classes, she laughed and said "Absolutely not!" She then went on to say, however, that her Methods course was really pretty good (20 years ago?), but there was no sustained training. She feels teachers should share materials and methods and she tries to do so with younger teachers. As a seasoned English teacher (who was the chair of the department at the school where she taught before), she developed the screening test that her present high school uses in the feeder schools to determine who will be placed in accelerated English classes when they enter high school. She and the acting head of the department and another teacher independently score the results holistically. Her training in holistic scoring consisted of learning from an art teacher who was an Achievement Test reader at the school where she taught previously, and attending a workshop at a local college taught by her old Methods teacher (a reader of SATs).

With regard to her own classes, in developing a test she says she tries to have something for everyone: some one-word answers, some essays, some easy questions and some opinion questions. Also, she always tries to weight the test up front, so that if the clock runs out the slow ones or the ones who use up the whole time and try to do a really good job won't be punished. If it's a big test, she may spread it out over several days. She may do some of it in class and assign some as a take-home test. (See previous sections for other comments re open-book tests and retesting if results are bad.) With regard to test design she notes, "It is high school--I always have some padding, (some) easy questions." For literature classes essay questions are her preferred assessment method, although she uses a combination a types of questions as noted.

Beyond the above considerations, how she judged the quality of her tests wasn't clear. Using the Advanced Sr. English MacBeth test (referred to above) as an example, when the results were so poor, she didn't say it was a bad test or it was too hard. She said the students weren't prepared. She wrote another test, the students studied again, and they did better. (It would have been interesting to compare the two.) In the same class she also noted that they didn't do as well as she expected on a test on Gulliver's Travels and she was "mad" at them. (These two tests were from the third quarter.)

It is difficult to say how often she tests. She gives tests after completion of chapters in Advanced Composition, or after completion of a novel or a group of short stories or a "unit" of satire selections or poetry, but the timing is not regular. She does not test routinely once a week, for example. Rather, she allows the pace of learning to determine the timing of the test--and as noted above, she is very flexible regarding the pace and will postpone a test until the students and she think they are ready. Her gradebook for last quarter indicates that study questions and assignments far outnumber tests in all of her classes (usually about two major tests per quarter). Tests tend to be major reviews or comparisons and are usually worth approximately three times the points of other graded activities, and each big test seems to be about 1/6 of the total points for the term, although the pattern is not clear cut.

2. Text-embedded paper and pencil tests and quizzes

She prefers not to use these and rarely does. In her literature classes she writes all the tests and quizzes. In her composition classes she may use some text-embedded tests--in general she said she made all her own tests, but then later mentioned the composition book's suggestion that a final test on vocabulary be given at the end, which she planned to do; it wasn't clear if that was a text-embedded test or her own. I never saw the composition chapter tests, unfortunately.

3. Performance assessments

This teacher is continually assessing her students' performance (via oral questions and their written work), but rarely in the formal sense of this term. One example of formal performance assessment is when students read aloud in class (as in Advanced Senior English when the class was reading a play) and she might make a mental or written note regarding their reading to include in her "class participation" column in her gradebook. But this forms a very small part of her assessment procedures in her literature classes and the quality of their reading is not as important as their participation.

The writing sample which she requests at the beginning of the school year is another example of formal performance assessment (see I.A. above). Here she is clearly assessing the students' writing skills. In literature assignments and tests, however, she primarily assesses content, although grading essays can be rather subjective and skill in writing obviously might tip the balance for a better grade. She seems to be aware of this, however. In the daily papers I saw she gave the same high grades for short as for long, elaborate answers if the content was correct. (As noted, she no longer grades on technical worth of the writing, though she still notices it...)

In the Advanced Composition classes, the subject lends itself to performance assessment. I did observe assignments in which the point was to write "an essay" and the components of what makes an essay had to be present for the student to receive a good grade.

4. Oral questioning strategies

Oral questioning plays a very big role in her daily teaching and assessment of progress. She may start out a class session by doing what she calls a "reality check," finding out where people are on the assignment by asking the group as a whole and by targeting individuals. She will ask if they finished, how far they got, and then specific questions based on the assignment. (She gets amazingly honest answers re progress on the assignment.) By this time in the term she has identified top, middle and bottom students (based on previous performance/achievement) and will use this knowledge to target students to judge if the class is doing the work and understanding it.

Linked to this way of assessing progress is her use of oral questioning during the instruction. She uses oral questions very skillfully to guide students through the material (particularly in the literature classes), starting with straightforward plot questions (recall) and moving easily into more thought-provoking questions about the interactions and feelings of characters in the work and the significance at the time it was written and now. (See 13 below re the cognitive levels of her questions.) Oral questioning, then, is obviously a teaching tool which she uses well. But while she is teaching she is also constantly assessing with this strategy. Although she relies a lot on spontaneous responses, she targets individuals frequently. She attempts to get most of the students involved, but is not always successful (in part because disruptive students require her attention). Regarding her delivery of oral questions, she is very skillful--waiting for a response, probing to get the student involved, encouraging and guiding when the answer isn't quite right, building on a student's answer and thus encouraging more involvement and ownership of the discussion. She doesn't always supply the answer, but looks for another student to help out. The pace is lively, however, and she supplies explanation when necessary.

Except for her column on reading/class participation (with pluses or blanks as grades), she doesn't keep written records of the assessments she conducts via oral questioning.

When asked about her preferred assessment methods, she replied that oral discussion with small groups of students (no more than 6) coupled with individual essay writing was the best (and most fun) way to determine what a student knows. I observed her use of this combination in her Advanced American Literature class.

5. Standardized tests

This teacher feels standardized testing is not useful for teaching English (her main focus is literature). She noted that the SAT is valuable (for college placement), but she stressed that students couldn't really study for it in a brief period of time. She has tried to explain to parents that it isn't useful to cram kids' heads full of vocabulary in preparation for the SAT. The test is much more than vocabulary; it is a matter of life skills and experience. Students from nonreading environments are at a real disadvantage. However, she does use the Simulated Test of Standard Written English (TSWE) to help prepare students for the SAT. The district distributed this to all the schools, but she didn't know they had it until she came across it in the library this year. Unlike the SAT, the TSWE tests only seven or eight things and she can teach them all. During my week of observation in her classes, she went over the TSWE in the two Advanced Composition classes to prepare students. She noted that the scores of students who had already taken them were not good; the highest score was only 24 out of 50. She also commented on the declining levels of SAT scores, remarking how different things are now--one rarely sees a score above 700 or even in the 600s. Thus, she seems to be using the results to generalize about the level of students she has today, even though she feels that such standardized tests are not useful in her work.

She also noted that once in a while it is useful to refer back to individual students' scores, giving the example of a boy who had puzzled her. She wasn't sure why he wasn't doing the work, but found that he had done well on the standardized test, so she knew he was bright--it wasn't a question of ability.

6. Group assessment methods

I did not observe any group projects in which students worked together for a grade. The teacher mentioned one instance last quarter in Advanced American Literature when they did TV panels--but the only credit they got was a check in the gradebook.

7. Opinions of other teachers

This appeared to enter into her assessments very seldom, though I suspect she uses this type of information when she gets it. (I did not discuss this topic in interviews with her.) She does eat lunch in the teachers' lunchroom and has contact with other teachers, so she has access to their opinions. Since she believes in sharing materials and methods, it is likely that exceptional students (problems or outstanding students) are a topic of discussion from time to time. My presence obviously inhibited some of the normal lunchtime conversation. Teachers did talk shop, however, as well as socialize.

On one occasion she did mention to me that she knew that a boy who had been doing very little in her classes and had begun to participate was also doing little work in other classes. (She was pleased to see him begin to tune in.)

8. Assessment of reasoning skills

As noted earlier, helping students learn to think and finding out how what they've learned has changed their thinking is a major part of this teacher's purpose in teaching and in assessing. Whether or not she uses a consciously-defined taxonomy in selecting her questions is unclear. In practice, however, she does build from recall questions to questions requiring higher level thinking skills and uses a variety of types or levels of questions in all aspects of assessment, oral questioning, study questions and tests. (See 4 above and 9 and 13 below.) She notes that she herself is a synthesizer, that she's not good at recall, but she uses recall questions to get the students through the material.

9. Regular assignments

Assignments are a major part of daily classroom activity, both in the literature and in the composition classes. In the Advanced Senior English class and in the Advanced American Literature class the teacher always writes her own study/discussion questions. In the "regular" American Literature class (which she considers to be at a very low level) she selects questions from among the questions in the text of short stories they are currently using. When I asked the basis for her selection of certain questions and not others she replied that she was trying to turn these students into readers. In some instances the questions were too hard, in others she didn't want them to spend more time on the topic. The bottom line was that she didn't want to turn them off. She feels that in this class they may have read more than they ever have in their lives and she wants to encourage that.

When it comes to homework, she says students at this school "are bad." Of the sophomores she doesn't ask for more than 30-40 minutes daily and only assigns them reading as homework. In her "regular" American Literature class (her lowest class) she only expects about 20 minutes of work outside of class--they're supposed to be reading a book beyond the class-time work. In her writing classes, most of the work is done in class because she likes to be there to help and provide instant feedback. If the students worked hard in class they'd have little to do outside. During the week I observed, she followed this pattern, with the exception of the Advanced Senior English class. There she assigned more homework, including a take-home test. She was less explicit with these students about the "assignment"--a pattern of working independently on the study questions once they were handed out seemed to have already been established. However, at one point even the "top" student didn't realize that she wanted the answers to some dictated questions turned in. The teacher expects students to take responsibility for their own learning. However, she feels a little disappointed in these seniors--it's the first time she's had seniors who just don't work very hard.

In all her classes there were always numerous students who hadn't completed the assignment, and in almost all the classes she then gave time in class to get it done. She expects students to do their own work, but feels it's important to encourage peer collaboration (rather than competition)--to get them involved and talking about the subject. Because papers trickled in I never saw a complete set from any class. The random handfuls I did see were graded with just a number over the total possible and an occasional encouraging comment. On essays and short answer questions her method of assigning points is not spelled out, except that she reads what she expects to be the top and bottom students' papers to get an idea of how things are going to look. She notes that she is not infallible and recognizes that her grading may vary slightly after reading a lot of papers, so she is always willing to reread a paper if a student requests it. (This almost never happens.)

10. Student peer ratings

She does not use this method except informally when she encourages students to help each other or improve on a student's sentence or answer. The only other time I saw this was when she expressed exasperation after class about a student whose only contribution to class was an empty coke can, and another student commented about that student's lack of potential for college.

11. Student self ratings

Since her philosophy of teaching is to give the students responsibility for their own learning, she encourages them to look in the gradebook and evaluate where they are and what they need to be doing. Other than that, I did not observe her overtly asking them to rate themselves on work (except the occasional "How are you doing?"). She noted that two students had dropped out of her Advanced American Literature class to take a lower level class because they had decided that they were non-readers.

12. (See form)

13. Cognitive levels of questions posed

(See form) Of interest here are the differences between levels of questions posed in literature classes and questions in composition classes. The grammatical content of her composition classes causes them to have more recall and analysis questions and far fewer comparison, inference and evaluation questions. Literature, on the other hand, lends itself well to higher order thinking questions.

Note: Some of the oral questions were reviews of text or study questions. Also, literature tests and quizzes are under-represented since during my observations there was only one literature test and one 1-question quiz, whereas two composition tests were given and reviewed.

14. Strategies for integrating assessment and instruction

As noted in section II.A.4. above, this teacher relies heavily on oral questioning as an instruction and assessment tool and is extremely skillful at weaving the two together. However, her lack of recordkeeping on such oral assessments makes this integration less than ideal. Another way this teacher integrates assessment and instruction is by orally correcting or reviewing assignments and tests in class. She uses this often as an instructional tool, especially when the results of an assessment indicate students are having problems with the material. I did not see peer editing used, except informally (peer collaboration). As noted previously, in the composition classes she did use the TSWE as a practice for real test-taking and went over it item by item in class as well.

15. Dealing with cheating

I saw little evidence of her overt strategies for dealing with cheating. In one class before the test she said, "Okay, test-taking position," and kids straightened around in their seats, but in another she actually left the room during part of the test (was this because I was there?). I did see students turned around and even talking during tests. (The atmosphere implied that these were not very serious tests.)

Plagiarism: She is aware of this as a problem. Recall that she keeps writing samples on file in for later review of students' command of the language. I observed an instance when she asked a student to bring in the books he had used as references for a paper. She commented to me that there was no way that the ideas in that paper were his. Unfortunately, the books he chose to bring in were not the ones where he got the ideas. I observed one instance of copied work on an in-class assignment. Two boys' papers on "a personal time of change" were almost identical. In these cases she would talk to the students and give them a lesser grade.

B. Assessment of affect

1. Observing individual students

By this time of the year, this teacher has clear ideas about her students' behavior. The teacher seems to be genuinely interested in her students as individuals and to consider them as such. Many times in discussing the work of students she would explain to me the family circumstances that might be causing disruption in the student's life at the time, for example, and thereby causing a certain behavior problem. (However, she is not a teacher who gets heavily involved in the lives of her students outside of class. She has decided that the school has other personnel whose job it is to do that.)

It seemed that most of this teacher's problems in teaching related to the social behavior of her students. Some days she would throw up her hands in disgust. Other days she would sarcastically comment about the environment in the room-- "Lost it again, huh?" when the noise level went from that of quiet concentration to restless chatting and teasing; "peace, peace, peace"; "maybe we should try music" (to calm them). As noted, she used oral questions to control some behavior. Because her classes tended to have such short attention spans and tended to display disruptive behavior frequently, her approach to it was primarily reactive, responding once the noise level had reached some intolerable state or a student had gone beyond some limit (defined in her mind and at least somewhat in the minds of the students--they seemed to know when they were out of line, though a few continued to challenge or be sassy). In this sense quieter, troubled students get less attention in class (because of the necessity to control the class); however, she gives serious thought to her students, their work, and their behavior. She holds many mini-conferences with individuals--during class when students are working at their desks and after and before class.

On occasion she filled out a Student Warning Slip to send to the office, for example, if a student was continually tardy or never brought his book to class. This slip would cause a note to be sent to the parents. It seemed she kept these slips for a day after filling one out to see if the pattern continued. On one occasion when the student did bring his book the next day she encouraged him by saying that she was going to tear up the slip (he didn't even know she had filled one out). Another time she noted to me that a student was really trying since she had sent a warning slip, so somebody must have talked to him.

Affective traits that she considers (based on my observations and our conversations, but not based on direct questioning of the teacher): motivation and interest (as seen in attendance and tardiness--big problems!--and in class participation and willingness to do the work); discipline (concentration and application to the work); respect (for the teacher and the class); disruptive behavior (loud talking or shouting, physical activity in class such as running, shoving, throwing things, etc.).

She has well defined performance criteria (regarding affect), but it takes several days in her class to become aware of this. She notes that she doesn't maintain a really tight ship because she thinks a restricted environment would not help these kids learn. Except for her checks in the gradebook regarding class participation and occasional notes to herself or warning slips, she does not keep good concrete records of her assessment of affect. She has taught for so many years that her experience has shown her that she is a relatively good judge of behavior (this is my sense of the situation).

2. Observing group interactions

Group interactions clearly give her clues to individual affective traits, especially early in the year or term. In her classes there were many small group interactions going on daily (usually the same participants). An example of what she inferred from these is her comment on two girls who have not performed well and usually sit together: One is doing much better now, does perfectly acceptable work when she settles down. She does fine when the other girl is not around, so she'll probably be okay if the other one doesn't come back to class. (The other has done nothing at all in class.) The teacher goes on to note that of course it sometimes works the other way around too; the girl who is settling down could have a positive influence on the other.

3. Using questionnaires

I saw no use of these.

4. Using interviews (formal and informal)

As noted above, this teacher does meet often with individual students in mini-conferences to discuss their performance and behavior, and sometimes to discuss the quality of their work (achievement). I'm not sure if she tries to do this an equal number of times with each student. It seemed to me she did it more with problem students, next often with exceptionally good students, and least often with average students. She remarked to me that she felt an English teacher could often do more than a guidance counselor for a student--but this was in the context of helping a marginal student think about planning and choice of classes, rather than specifically about behavior.

No use of formal interviews was observed or discussed.

5. Opinions of other teachers

I saw and heard very little about the opinions of other teachers regarding affect, though I know they talk in the lunchroom and there I heard other teachers comment about the behavior of specific students.

6. Opinions of other students

The teacher asks students where someone is or what's the matter with the absent student (while taking role, for example). Students know by now that she is concerned for their welfare. I did not observe her gathering their opinions, but I do know that she occasionally uses "the grapevine" to get a message about behavior to a student. I see no reason to think she wouldn't gather information that way, too. In-class interactions when students police their peers also give her information about individual students' behavior.

7. Opinions of parents

She notes that there is precious little contact with parents at this school (especially when compared to the parental involvement at the school where she previously taught--involvement there was excessive). One instance of parental contact during my week of observation: A mother wrote the teacher a letter recognizing that her daughter was having difficulty in school and might not graduate and asking the teacher to help her make it through. This letter was in response to a failure warning slip sent home. The teacher feels that the girl is not a bad student; if she will just attend class and try, the teacher is willing to find a way to get her through. This will require special attention, because there is no way the girl can make up the many assignments she hasn't done along the way.

8. Past student records

I found no mention of looking at past student records (other than screening tests) regarding student behavior. The teacher has had some of these students in other classes in the past, in which cases she has personal experience with their past records and it appears that they do, indeed, influence her assessment of their behavior.

9. and 10. (See form)

C. Assessment of ability

Ability per se does not seem to be of major importance to this teacher. She says students don't have to be brilliant to do well in her classes. Willingness to try is more important to her than ability. However, she did occasionally use the term "able" or "capable" to describe students. And she often commented on how her teaching at this school was necessarily on a lower level than it had been at her previous school. (Whether this was ability or achievement or both is difficult to determine.)

In trying to identify how she measures students' ability and how it affects her teaching, it is sometimes hard to separate ability from achievement. Affective factors are also entwined in this issue. When she says that she knows what a girl is capable of based on having had her as a student in a previous class, she is probably measuring a combination of ability, achievement and affect. (In any case, her assessment was accurate: When given a second chance the girl went from a D to an A.) When she complains that the third quarter grades for the regular American Literature class don't reflect their abilities, how does she know what they are capable of doing (as separate from what they have been willing to do)? When she talks about certain individuals as being very capable, what tips her off? Some of the first clues for her are humor or sparkle, a quickness of mind, a spark of interest ignited. Is she thinking in terms of ability when she remarks that you can't teach critical thinking skills to everyone?—with some students you simply cannot explain why a basic statement is illogical, but with someone "quick" it's easy.

Her sense of students' ability does influence her teaching. She makes a special effort to meet individual students' needs (even though it complicates her life as a teacher considerably). She individualizes her instructional objectives and strategies as much as possible. She groups for instruction if it can be done within the parameters of the lesson plan, meeting separately with students who are farther ahead in their reading or providing extra assignments and outside time for exceptional students. Her methods for measuring achievement may be flexible too--recall, for example, the girl she was willing to help finish school even though she wouldn't have fulfilled all of the requirements. She also notes that F's usually mean that the students didn't come to class; if they attend she can usually get them through. Her grading standards vary also, as reflected by the case of the girl whose grade in the advanced class was equivalent to a better grade in the regular class where she should have been placed; the teacher got the grade changed. She has had to lower her expectations for her Advanced Senior English class (and consequently her grading standards) compared to classes at that level in other years.

This issue is complex and often unclear. She sadly remarks on the declining SAT scores, attributing this to a decline in the reading the public does, rather than to a decline in abilities. Yet she looks to the results of standardized tests when she is really puzzled about whether a student's performance is due to lack of ability or some affective factor.

D. Text assessments

(See form)

III. CRITERIA FOR SELECTING ASSESSMENT METHODS

A., B. and E. Results fit purpose, method matches material taught, and origin of assessment

This teacher does this intuitively. The best examples are when she selects only certain questions from the text-embedded questions or prefers to write her own entirely. (However, there are several reasons for writing her own--freedom to choose a wide variety of books for which assessments are not necessarily available, many years of experience writing assessments, preference for her own way of guiding learning via assessment... I am not sure if she bothers to find out what assessments are available for the literature she selects, unless it happens to come with the edition she has.) Since her major purpose in teaching, especially in literature, is to get the students thinking, she prefers assessments (whether oral questions, study questions or tests) which help her see how their thinking is progressing.

Her methods seem to match the material well. In her composition classes, which are currently focused on aspects of grammar and writing style, she uses the text questions, which call for recall of points of grammar and stylistic terms and samples of writing. Her literature class assessment methods are specifically designed to assess recall of the materials read, analysis, inference and evaluation of theme, etc., and comparison among works.

C. and D. Ease of development and ease of scoring

Ease of development does not appear to enter into this teacher's assessments. The fact that she provides variety to her students by allowing them to choose from many different books to read, all of which she too must read and for all of which she writes study questions and tests, is ample evidence that ease of development is not foremost in her mind. She admits that it might be a factor occasionally, depending on outside circumstances. She takes ease of scoring into account more frequently, although the number of short answer and essay questions on both her study questions and her tests belies this concern. She notes that in the interest of sleep and energy she sometimes has to do things that don't take a lot of time to grade. She uses holistic scoring on writing, and, as noted, has stopped scoring technical writing mistakes.

F. Time required to administer

This is relatively unimportant. She seems so focused on making sure that learning is going on, that she is extremely flexible about the time it takes. For example, if necessary, she may spread a test out over several days. (A separate, but related issue is her willingness to put off administering a test until the students are prepared so that they really have a chance to show what they know.)

G. Degree of objectivity

Very little was said about this. Her questions and tests reflect a concern for facts as well as interpretation (combining recall with other types of questions). She remarked that when they were studying Shakespeare last term she was a stickler for textual proof of what they thought, "no wild blue yonder theories." However, the way she assigns grades often requires a great deal of teacher judgment, thus lending itself to a more subjective basis for grading.

H. Applicability to measuring thinking skills

As noted on several items here, this is of top priority with her.

I. Effective control of cheating

She seems to feel that she knows what they can do and so can tell when they've copied. (See examples under II.A.15. above.) I think she would prefer not to have to be bothered with this issue. She prefers a collaborative learning environment, but recognizes the need for individual assessment. At least on daily assignments she is rather cavalier about cheating, I think. Since I only saw a few tests, I'm not sure how strict she can be. The testing environment I saw was not very strict.

J. (See form)

IV. QUALITY OF ASSESSMENTS

(See form)

V. FEEDBACK PROCEDURES

(See form)

Note: It is sometimes difficult to separate feedback regarding achievement from feedback about affect. The importance of this difference is reflected in the percent of oral and nonverbal feedback focused on achievement compared with the percent of written feedback focused on achievement. The disruptive behavior that goes on in this teacher's classes requires that oral/nonverbal feedback focus more on affect than does written feedback. The classroom environment also affects the amount of positive feedback given orally. This teacher is very positive and encouraging in her comments about achievement (though she will say when something is wrong). However, much of her feedback (both oral and nonverbal) in the classroom is negative (even if subtle, sarcastic or humorous) because the students' disruptive behavior demands her attention. Thus, overall, her written feedback tends to be much more positive than her oral feedback. In writing she often tries to add encouraging comments.

Regarding use of samples of performance as feedback: She occasionally has a student read an answer as an example. I couldn't discern any pattern re choice of student (it wasn't always--or ever?-- the top or bottom students), as this didn't happen often. More often she would mention the names of students who had completed their work or were at the point everyone should aim for.

VI. DESCRIPTION OF TEACHER AND ASSESSMENT

A. Teacher's background

This teacher started teaching at this school in 1964 and taught here until 1973, when she had to take a 1-1/2 year leave of absence due to illness. She resumed teaching in 1975 at another high school (which serves a more affluent community of students across town). She taught there for 10 years, rising to be the Chair of the English Department. Two years ago she returned to teach at the high school where she teaches currently. (See II.A.1. for more information about her training.)

B. Teacher's expenditure of time

She spends 16-18 hours per week outside of class, not counting exam preparations. She comes in before 8 a.m. and stays until 4 or 5 p.m. daily, never works on Saturdays, but does usually work part of Sunday. (For other details of A. and B. see form.)

C. Teacher characteristics

I have commented on many of these topics earlier.

This teacher definitely sees herself as a curriculum maker and presenter. However, she does believe in departmental consistency and continuity with regard to curriculum. Therefore, when she returned to this school last year she consulted with another member of the department so that she could give some coherence to the English curriculum. (She laughed as she remarked that not everyone does that and gave the example of a 21-year-old teacher who once taught Moby Dick for the entire year because it was his favorite book!)

She seems to have considerable freedom to choose materials (especially supplementary materials). She noted that in her regular American Literature class they had done Death of a Salesman, even though she knew that it was usually done in the advanced class, because she was sure that those kids would never get to that level (assessment?!) so there was no concern for duplication. She has very high expectations of herself as a professional. Sometimes it sounds as if she would really like to work with more motivated, harder-working kids. On other occasions she seems very dedicated to turning these kids on to the enjoyment of literature. In either case, she is very professional about her role in the process.

High quality performance: She is not rigid about the correctness of responses, unless dealing with a point of grammar or a fact of a plot. In her literature assessments, she allows for variation of interpretation at times. For example, last term on the Advanced Senior English test on Gulliver's Travels she scanned through the tests to see what she had before grading and found variation on what Gulliver represented, so she decided to accept a cluster of interpretations.

Her view of her students is only stereotypic when she globally compares them with the students at the high school where she taught before. Otherwise she seems very aware of individual personalities and outside circumstances.

Performance norms: She seems to have very clear, but unwritten and pretty much unstated performance norms.

Experimentation: She is very open to trying something new. She is very pleased that having the Advanced American Literature class work on so many different novels simultaneously is working out so well. It was an experiment and she wasn't sure it would work with this group, but they are handling the rather independent individual and small group work well.

Orientation to cheating: As noted, she does not seem very concerned with cheating. She did remark that she is more careful with "announced" tests and does not return them until all make-up tests are done. (However, she does not change the test for the make-up.) She also noted that on regular assignment papers turned in late she sometimes sees that someone copied from a paper that had already been handed back, but she goes on to say that she has too much to keep track of and can't always remember what's been turned in.

Amount of cheating: I'm not at all sure how much cheating goes on--I saw few tests or papers during the week of observation. And her tolerance of a noisy classroom (with lots of off-task behavior) and her encouragement of collaboration on daily assignments made it difficult to define "cheating" regarding daily activities.

Value of promptness and timely work completion: As previously noted, in her classes the assignments drag on and trickle in. She herself remarked that she receives "endless late papers." She grades on the merit of the piece, but puts a box around the score in her gradebook for any work that is turned in late. At the end of the quarter she can see at a glance the number of boxes (late papers) a student has and she will take that into consideration in the final grade. In class she publicly announces whose papers are still not in (though it didn't seem to phase the students).

Interpersonal environment of the classroom regarding assessment: As noted, she prefers a collaborative environment. She notes that in this country our heavy emphasis on competition keeps us focusing on individuals. She thinks a better learning environment is achieved when students are encouraged to help each other. She had discussed the differences between classrooms in Sweden and in this country with the school's Swedish exchange student, who explained that in Sweden when kids finish a task they help someone else. There a lot of cooperation takes place, a lot of kids engage in discussing the subject or task, and students feel "good vibes" re helping or getting help from a peer. She chuckled when remembering how teachers at the other school where she taught thought the Southeast Asian kids were cheating when they helped each other on a test or task.

Reasons for student success or failure: Her definition of success would be to turn her students on to the enjoyment of good literature; she's not looking for English majors. However, in this school she knows she's mightily challenged to meet this goal. Most of her students do not come from "reading" homes.

She does not take the responsibility for success entirely on herself. Her stated philosophy is that the students are old enough to be treated like adults and therefore are responsible for their own learning. I think that since she has the confidence that she's a good teacher she would attribute most of the responsibility for success to the student. Success can also be measured (and usually is) in terms of a passing grade. Her power and influence over success or failure by this definition are evidenced by her statement that if students have been placed properly and if they attend class, she usually can get them through.

VII. TEACHER'S PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

As noted, in general she has decided that students at this school are not very motivated or mature and therefore do not perform at very high levels.

Their study skills are nearly nil in many cases. She tries to encourage independent learning and responsibility for one's own progress, but finds that she has had to lower her expectations and monitor, encourage, spoon feed, and prod students far, far more than she has had to in the past. She feels that her students' feedback needs are greater than before and she has had to give points and credit for everything. (This seems a bit contradictory to the lack of interest observed among students regarding completion of work and response to feedback when they got it.)

Sense of fairness: She says the students know she'll reread a paper if asked, but they almost never have requested it. I did not have much opportunity to talk with the students themselves. The atmosphere in the classroom (although often noisy and disrespectful) seemed to be accepting of the teacher's authority and knowledge regarding the subject being taught. Also, at lunch one day another teacher passed on a compliment to this teacher. Apparently she had overheard a student talking about a really good, conscientious, hard-working teacher and it turned out to be this one.

Reaction to testing: She feels students in this school are very blase about tests. Again she compares them with students from the other school. There, at finals time kids would be cramming in the halls even. Here, the atmosphere in the halls is hardly different from any other time of year and some students will even arrive in class and ask "What are we doing today?" or arrive at the wrong time to take an exam. I observed a few students reacting with semi-panic when they mistakenly thought they were being given a test (unannounced). In another class at one point she assured the students, "This is not a test, just study questions." Once a boy commented that he was very hard on himself in testing situations and she remarked that she thought one needed a certain balance between relaxation and tension to handle tests well. She gave me the example of a Vietnamese student who she thought had the appropriate amount of tension and responded well in testing.

Parental expectations: Commented on above. Her comparisons of the excessive involvement of parents at the other school ("always beating down your door" to argue about a few points, even though they said they weren't concerned with grades) and the dirth of parental involvement here highlight the influence parental involvement can have in shaping a teacher's assessment methods and the assessment environment (need for accountability, specific issues of interest to parents, etc.).

VIII. POLICY AND ASSESSMENT

This teacher has been teaching in the district for 20 years and thus knows the basic ground rules. However, when I asked about specific policies she was usually vague about them.

Testing: She hasn't had to read for standardized testing for years, so she is not sure what the "RITs" (State graduation competency tests) require for reading now. She feels that reading kills the Southeast Asian kids--they study hard, do their homework, get passing grades, but can't pass the RITs--and yet they'll be able to go out, get jobs, and function fine. She notes that making standards for all isn't really appropriate or fair. (I did not get information about school standards regarding course-specific testing.)

Homework policy: She supposes there is one written down somewhere and remembers that the teachers had to come up with something once, but she obviously follows her own perceptions of the students' needs and, more important in the day-to-day classroom operations, their willingness to do homework.

Attendance: She reports attendance daily, keeping track of absences and tardiness. These are major problems in this school and the attendance officer is kept busy. (He escorted several students to class during the week I observed.) This teacher seems to have considerable discretion in this area; she is willing to find ways to help students complete a course even when they have been absent much of the time.

Content of the curriculum: As noted, she believes in continuity and did confer with the department when she planned her courses last year. She noted that the English curriculum at this high school is a jumble this year because they are in the process of changing to fit the district curriculum (at least regarding levels). For example, the district specifies that American Literature be taught on the junior level; at this school it has been a sophomore-level course. Next year they will conform to district specifications. She would welcome some comparability with district standards to ease the problems of students who transfer.

PROFILE OF LANGUAGE ARTS CASE #1

I. ASSESSMENT PURPOSES

A. Diagnosing individual student needs	Uninformed					X	Well informed
	Irrelevant					X	Relevant
	Useless					X	Useful
	Not used					X	Used frequently
B. Diagnosing group needs	Uninformed					X	Well informed
	Irrelevant					X	Relevant
	Useless					X	Useful
	Not used					X	Used frequently
C. Assigning grades	Uninformed				X		Well informed
	Irrelevant					X	Relevant
	Useless		X				Useful
	Not used				X		Used frequently
D. Grouping for instruction within class	Uninformed				X		Well informed
	Irrelevant				X		Relevant
	Useless				X		Useful
	Not used				X		Used frequently
E. Identifying students for special services	Uninformed				X		Well informed
	Irrelevant				X		Relevant
	Useless				X		Useful
	Not used			X			Used frequently
F. Controlling and motivating students	Uninformed				X		Well informed
	Irrelevant				X		Relevant
	Useless				X		Useful
	Not used				X		Used frequently
G. Evaluating instruction	Uninformed					X	Well informed
	Irrelevant					X	Relevant
	Useless					X	Useful
	Not used					X	Used frequently
H. Communicating achievement expectations	Uninformed					X	Well informed
	Irrelevant					X	Relevant
	Useless					X	Useful
	Not used			X			Used frequently
I. Communicating affective expectations	Uninformed					X	Well informed
	Irrelevant					X	Relevant
	Useless					X	Useful
	Not used					X	Used frequently
J. Providing test-taking experience	Uninformed					X	Well informed
	Irrelevant		X				Relevant
	Useless		X				Useful
	Not used		X				Used frequently

K. Relative importance of purposes (to the teacher)

Given "100 importance points" to distribute across the purposes listed below, how would you distribute those points to reflect the relative importance of the decisions listed?

Diagnosing individual needs	16
Diagnosing group needs	16
Assigning grades	5
Grouping for instruction	5
Identifying students for special services	5
Controlling and motivating	10
Evaluating instruction	16
Communicating achievement expectations	15
Communicating affective expectations	10
Test taking experience	2
	100 points

II. ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

A. Assessment of Achievement

1. Teacher-developed paper and pencil tests and quizzes	Uninformed					X	Well informed
	Inappropriate					X	Appropriate
	Useless					X	Useful
	Not used				X		Used frequently
2. Text-embedded paper and pencil tests and quizzes	Uninformed					X	Well informed
	Inappropriate			X			Appropriate
	Useless		X				Useful
	Not used		X				Used frequently
3. Performance assessments	Uninformed			X			Well informed
	Inappropriate					X	Appropriate
	Useless					X	Useful
	Not used			X			Used frequently
4. Oral questioning strategies	Uninformed					X	Well informed
	Inappropriate					X	Appropriate
	Useless					X	Useful
	Not used					X	Used frequently
5. Standardized tests	Uninformed				X		Well informed
	Inappropriate			X			Appropriate
	Useless		X				Useful
	Not used		X				Used frequently
6. Group assessment methods	Uninformed			X			Well informed
	Inappropriate			X			Appropriate
	Useless			X			Useful
	Not used		X				Used frequently
	(Heard of one, but didn't see)						
7. Opinions of other teachers	Uninformed			X	(Not sure)		Well informed
	Inappropriate			X			Appropriate
	Useless			X			Useful
	Not used		X				Used frequently
8. Assessment of reasoning skills	Uninformed					X	Well informed
	Inappropriate					X	Appropriate
	Useless					X	Useful
	Not used					X	Used frequently
9. Regular assignments	Uninformed					X	Well informed
	Inappropriate					X	Appropriate
	Useless					X	Useful
	Not used					X	Used frequently
10. Student peer ratings	Uninformed			(Not known)			Well informed
	Inappropriate			X			Appropriate
	Useless		X				Useful
	Not used	X					Used frequently

11. Student self ratings

Uninformed		(Not known)				Well informed
Inappropriate			X			Appropriate
Useless			X			Useful
Not used		X				Used frequently

12. Proportion of all assessments for all purposes that are of various types This depends on the subject being taught. Overall for all classes:

Teacher-developed paper and pencil tests	12
Text-embedded paper and pencil tests	8
Performance assessments	5
Oral questions	40
Standardized tests	2
Opinions of other teachers	1
Regular assignments	31
Group assessments	0
Student peer ratings	0
Student self ratings	1
	100%

13. Cognitive levels of questions posed in:

	Study and Discussion Questions	Oral Questions	Tests and Quizzes
Recall			
	See attached		
Analysis			
Comparison			
Inference			
Evaluation			

14. Strategies for integrating assessment and instruction

Uninformed				X		Well informed
Inappropriate					X	Appropriate
Useless					X	Useful
Not used					X	Used frequently

15. Dealing with cheating

Uninformed				X		Well informed
Inappropriate					X	Appropriate
Useless					X	Useful
Not used			X			Used frequently

II.A.13. Cognitive levels of questions posed in:

	Study and Discussion Questions						Oral Questions			Tests and Quizzes*		
	Text-embedded			Teacher-developed								
	All	Lit.	Comp.	All	Lit.	Comp.	All	Lit.	Comp.	All	Lit.	Comp.
Recall	39%	16%	73%	23%	23%	-	47%	43%	61%	49%	58%	43%
Analysis	7%	-	18%	11%	11%	-	14%	10%	26%	33%	3%	55%
Comparison	4%	6%	-	8%	8%	-	6%	6%	4%	-	-	-
Inference	46%	78%	-	44%	44%	-	24%	31%	-	14%	34%	-
Evaluation	4%	-	9%	14%	14%	-	10%	10%	9%	3%	5%	2%

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*All teacher-developed
(I did not tally the TSWE questions.)

B. Assessment of Affect

1. Observing individual students	Uninformed				X		Well informed
	Inappropriate					X	Appropriate
	Useless					X	Useful
	Not used					X	Used frequently
2. Observing group interactions	Uninformed					X	Well informed
	Inappropriate					X	Appropriate
	Useless					X	Useful
	Not used				X		Used frequently
3. Using questionnaires	Uninformed		(Not known)				Well informed
	Inappropriate						Appropriate
	Useless						Useful
	Not used	X					Used frequently
4. Using interviews (formal and informal)	Uninformed				X		Well informed
	Inappropriate					X	Appropriate
	Useless					X	Useful
	Not used					X	Used frequently
5. Opinions of other teachers	Uninformed			X			Well informed
	Inappropriate		X				Appropriate
	Useless		X				Useful
	Not used		X				Used frequently
6. Opinions of other students	Uninformed			X			Well informed
	Inappropriate		X				Appropriate
	Useless		X				Useful
	Not used		X				Used frequently
7. Opinions of parents	Uninformed				X		Well informed
	Inappropriate				X		Appropriate
	Useless				X		Useful
	Not used		X				Used frequently
8. Past student records	Uninformed			X			Well informed
	Inappropriate		X				Appropriate
	Useless		X				Useful
	Not used		X				Used frequently

9. Checklist of affective characteristics measured:

F	Seriousness of purpose
F	Motivation and effort
I	Attitude
I	Learning style
I	Interests
	Values
	Preferences
I	Academic self-concept--she knows who thinks of self as good student or poor student
	Locus of control
I	Anxiety--especially re test-taking
I	Maturity
I	Social skills
I	Study skills
	Other (specify)

Code:
F = formal assessment conducted
I = informal assessment conducted

10. Relative importance of affective assessment methods:
(To the teacher)

Observing individual students	40
Observing group interactions	30
Using questionnaires	0
Using interviews (formal and informal)	15
Opinions of other teachers	4
Opinions of other students	2
Opinions of parents	4
Past student records	5
	100%

C. Assessment of Ability

1. Meaning of ability for teacher

Value of this factor for the teacher — Important ___ _X_ ___ ___ ___ Unimportant

Measurement of ability

Measured formally	X
Measured informally	X
Not measured	

Ingredients considered in assessment of ability, if measured:

	FACTOR(S) INCLUDED IN ASSESSMENT	MEASURED HOW?
1.	Previous performance	Standardized test scores; quality of work and grades
2.	Quality of work	Teacher's observation and experience with other classes, years, schools
3.	Spark/interest	
4.	Timeliness of work	
5.		

2. Check decisions influenced by results (i.e., change with varying levels of ability).

_X_ Instructional objectives
_X_ Instructional strategies
_X_ Grouping for instruction (within class)
_X_ Methods for measuring achievement
_X_ Grading standards
_X_ Students selected for special services
___ Other (specify ____________________)

D. Text Assessments

Checklist of assessment components provided with text-depends on the class

See attached

_____ _____ Oral questions for class use
_____ _____ Homework assignments
_____ _____ General assessment guidelines for teachers
_____ _____ Paper and pencil tests
_____ _____ Performance assessments
_____ _____ Scoring guidelines
_____ _____ Quality control guidelines
_____ _____ Other (specify ______________________________)

II.D. Text Assessments

Checklist of assessment components provided with text - depends on the class.

	Literature					
	Regular Am. Literature		Other *		Advanced Composition	
	Available	Used	Available	Used	Available	Used
Oral questions for class use	X	Some	No	N/A	X	X
Homework assignments	X	Some	No	N/A	X	X
General assessment guidelines for teachers	Don't know		No	N/A	Don't know	
Paper and pencil tests	Not sure		No	N/A	Don't know	
Performance assessments	Not sure		No	N/A	Don't know	
Scoring guidelines	Don't know		No	N/A	Don't know	
Quality control guidelines	Don't know		No	N/A	Don't know	
Other			No	N/A		

* Advanced American Literature and Advanced Senior English.

III. CRITERIA FOR SELECTING ASSESSMENT METHODS

A. Results fit purpose	Uninformed					X	Well informed
	Unimportant					X	Important
	Not used					X	Used frequently
B. Method matches material taught	Uninformed					X	Well informed
	Unimportant					X	Important
	Not used					X	Used frequently
C. Ease of development	Uninformed					X	Well informed
	Unimportant		X				Important
	Not used		X				Used frequently
D. Ease of scoring	Uninformed				X		Well informed
	Unimportant				X		Important
	Not used				X		Used frequently
E. Origin of assessment	Uninformed					X	Well informed
	(if good)--Unimportant	X					Important
	Not used					X	Used frequently
F. Time required to administer	Uninformed				X		Well informed
	Unimportant			X			Important
	Not used			X			Used frequently
G. Degree of objectivity	Uninformed				X		Well informed
	Unimportant				X		Important
	Not used			X			Used frequently
H. Applicability to measuring thinking skills	Uninformed					X	Well informed
	Unimportant					X	Important
	Not used				X		Used frequently
I. Effective control of cheating	Uninformed			X			Well informed
	Unimportant			X			Important
	Not used			X			Used frequently

J. Relative importance of criteria

	Results fit purpose	20
	Method matches material taught	20
	Ease of development	5
	Ease of scoring	8
(if good)	Origin of assessment	2
	Time required to administer	5
	Degree of objectivity	12
	Applicability to measuring thinking skills	23
	Effective control of cheating	5
		100%

IV. QUALITY OF ASSESSMENTS

A. Percent of paper and pencil assessments (teacher-developed or text-embedded) having the following characteristics (need not total 100%):

%	
	Clear description of assessment specifications
95+	Matches content of instruction
75	Matches cognitive levels of instruction
90	Minimizes time required to gather needed information
90	Item format matches desired outcome
95	Items clearly written
90	Items sample domain
?	Scoring procedures planned--almost never specified to kids; in her head
?	Scoring criteria written for essays--told what must be included, but not necessarily the score
90	Clear directions
100	High quality reproduction
75	Test scheduled to minimize distractions--high level of distraction in class! (but she tries)

B. Percent of performance assessments having the following characteristics:
(I saw very few of these)

%	
75	Clear description of trait to be measured with levels of proficiency articulated--in her head
75	Matches intended outcomes of instruction
95	Minimizes time required to gather needed information
75	Clear performance criteria--in her head
33	Students aware of criteria
33	Thoughtful exercises yield performance samples
33	Exercises sample performance domain
75	Performance rating planned--in her head
95	Results match information needs

C. Percent of oral questions having the following characteristics:

%	
85	Sampling methods cover range of achievement levels of students
60?	Strategies involve everyone--active get more attention
85	Teacher waits for response--very good on this and on probing
95	Student's response given supportive reaction--extremely good and builds on them
60	Questions match cognitive levels of instruction*
5?	Written performance records maintained--only a check re classroom participation

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*May spend more time on recall then she would prefer to get class back on track or check where they are.

V. FEEDBACK PROCEDURES

A. For oral and nonverbal feedback

Percent of feedback delivered to students who are:

%	
40	Strong (vs. weak)--and middle gets less attn. than extremes
40	Correct (vs. incorrect)--more needed for incorrect to help get on track
50	Male (vs. female)

Percent of feedback having the following characteristics:

%	
85	Delivered in class (vs. out of class)
80	Oral (vs. nonverbal)
75	Public (vs. private)
95	Fair (vs. unfair)
45	Focused on achievement (vs. affect)
95	Germane (vs. irrelevant)
95	Immediate (vs. delayed)
40	Positive (vs. negative)

B. For written feedback

Percent of feedback delivered to students who are:

%	
40	Strong (vs. weak)
50	Correct (vs. incorrect)
50	Male (vs. female)

Percent of feedback having the following characteristics:

%	
35	Comment (vs. symbol)
80	Positive (vs. negative)
95	Fair (vs. unfair)
95	Germane (vs. irrelevant)
75	Focused on achievement (vs. affect)

Uses samples of performance as feedback — Never ___ ___ X ___ ___ Frequently

Uses public achievement chart as feedback — Never X ___ ___ ___ ___ Frequently

VI. DESCRIPTION OF TEACHER AND ASSESSMENT

A. Teacher's background

1. Teacher experience, number of years:

20 Overall
20 At grade level
9 + 1 In school--interrupted by 10 years at different school
20 With content

2. Relative contributions of various sources to teacher's knowledge of assessment methodology

%	
5	Teacher preparation training
10	Inservice training--including workshop at local college
10	Ideas and suggestions of colleagues
2	Professional literature
0?	Teacher's guide to textbooks
73	Own experience in classroom
100%	

B. Teacher's expenditure of time

1. Proportion of time spent in teaching activities--all time, not just class time

%	
20	Planning
20	Teaching (one on one)
20	Teaching (group)
30+	Assessing (see list below)--this incl. oral questioning
10	Other (specify: counseling)
100%	

2. Proportion of time spent in assessment activities (paper and pencil, performance assessment, oral, assignments)

%	
5	Reviewing and selecting assessments
20	Developing own assessments
20	Administering--incl. oral questioning, which takes up a lot of time
30	Scoring and recording
20	Providing feedback
5?	Evaluating quality
100%	

C. Teacher characteristics

Role in the classroom — Curriculum maker and presenter X ___ ___ ___ ___ Servant of policy delivering required content

Expectations of professional self	Expects little					X	Expects a great deal
Structure needs	Rigid				X		Flexible
View of high quality performance	Correctness demanded				X		Degrees of quality eval.
Stereotypic view of students	None			X			Expressed often
Attends to exceptional student	Never				X		Frequently
Sense of performance norms	Unclear					X	Very clear but unstated
Orientation to experimentation	No risks					X	Risk taker
Orientation to cheating	No concern		X				Major concern
Amount of cheating	None			X?			A great deal
Value of promptness; importance of timely work completion	Unimportant		X				Important

Interpersonal environment of the classroom regarding assessment:

Cooperative	None					X	Frequent
Competitive	None		X				Frequent

Attributions for reasons of student success/failure:

75	Due to student
25	Due to teacher
100%	

Basis for grading students:

30	Level of effort
10	Sense of ability
60	Demonstrated achievement
100%	

Interpretation of assessment:

90	Norm-referenced
10	Criterion-referenced
100%	

VII. TEACHER'S PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

A. Ability to learn	Low			X			High
	No variation					X	Great deal
	Variation ignored					X	Addressed
B. Willingness to learn	Low		X				High
	No variation					X	Great deal
	Variation ignored					X	Addressed
C. Rate of achievement	Low		X				High
	Decreasing			X			Increasing
	No variation					X	Great deal
	Variation ignored					X	Addressed
D. Maturity	Irresponsible		X				Responsible
	No variation					X	Great deal
	Variation ignored					X	Addressed
E. Study skills	Undeveloped		X				Developed
	No variation					X	Great deal
	Variation ignored					X	Addressed
F. Social skills	Undeveloped			X			Developed
	No variation					X	Great deal
	Variation ignored					X	Addressed
G. Willingness to perform	Reticent		X				Willing
	No variation					X	Great deal
	Variation ignored					X	Addressed
H. Feedback needs	Weak				X		Strong
	No variation				X		Great deal
	Variation ignored				X		Addressed
I. Self-assessment skills	Undeveloped		X				Developed
	No variation					X	Great deal
	Variation ignored					X	Addressed

J. Sense of fairness (I'm not sure)	Unclear				X		Clear
	No variation		X				Great deal
	Variation ignored			X			Addressed
K. Reaction to testing	Tranquil		X				Anxious
	No variation			X			Great deal
	Variation ignored					X	Addressed
L. Parental expectations	Unclear		X				Clear
	Low		X				High
	Unimportant					X	Important
	No variation					X	Great deal
	Variation ignored					X	Addressed

VIII. ASSESSMENT POLICY
(See attached table)

VIII. What policies influence classroom assessment?

FOCUS OF POLICY	ORIGINS OF POLICY					
	Federal	State	District	School	Department	Collegial
Testing	A. Does a standard exist? B. Does teacher know standard? C. Does it impact practice? How?	A. B. C. See text	A. B. C.		A. B. C.	A. B. C.
Reporting	A. B. C.		A. B. C. See previous text	A. B. C.	A. B. C.	
Homework			A. B. C.	A. B. C. See text	A. B. C.	A. B. C.
Class Size			A. B. C.			
Selection Spec. Prog. and/or Recognition	A. B. C.	A. B. C.	A. B. C.			
Attendance			A. B. C.	See text		A. B. C. See text
Content to Be Taught (Inc. Text Selection)			A. B. C. See text	A. B. C.	A. B. C. See text	A. B. C.

LANGUAGE ARTS CASE STUDY #2

Background Information

This English teacher teaches in the only 4-year high school in a suburban/rural district. The school is a very academically oriented high school with a young, progressive principal. The school enjoys great parent support. Grades are very important here. According to the teacher, 40-50% of the students go on to 4-year colleges. The 1,300 member student body is predominantly white.

This teacher teaches four classes per day: Freshman Language Arts (25 students), required; two periods of "regular" (as opposed to "advanced") American Literature (27 juniors in each class), a year-long class, one semester of which is required; and Mass Media (25 students, primarily senior boys), an elective. There are six periods per day (plus an "early period" which she does not teach). Teachers have two of the six periods free for "preparation and support." (They successfully negotiated for a support period so they could make better use of their time, even if it meant slightly larger classes.) This teacher plays an active role in other school activities. In the fall she coaches volleyball (she used to coach basketball). She is currently involved in the first school-wide Writing Festival, which is being scored by outside judges, but which requires considerable time to coordinate. She and her husband (who is also a teacher at the school) were prom chaperones during the time I was observing at the school.

I. ASSESSMENT PURPOSES

This teacher states that she uses assessment for the following purposes: to check what she's done; to see if some (certain?) kids are paying attention; and to see if the kids are understanding the material. She notes that in teaching literature, her assessments are generally two-fold: objective (to assess specific knowledge of plots) and essay (to assess students' handling of ideas, themes, and concepts). For her, the point of teaching literature is to teach students to appreciate and understand, rather than to know the details of a particular piece. "It's so subjective!" she exclaims.

A. Diagnosing individual student needs

At the beginning of the year, the teacher says it takes a couple of weeks to size up the class. In particular she notes whether students turn in their work on time, are late with it or never hand it in. She also watches classroom behavior, such as attendance and participation in class. Throughout the year she uses oral questioning, written study questions and tests and quizzes to monitor how students are doing. For example, at one point when the class was correcting a quiz, she commented, "If you got that one wrong I'm a little concerned because that was an important part (of the story)." Most of her assessing is geared toward group needs and evaluation of group instruction, however. In fact, she controls the pace of the class, actively discouraging individual students from reading ahead or doing outside activities related to the topic (such as seeing the movie version after reading the book). She wants the students to stay together as a group. Rather than bringing in new work to challenge and stimulate individuals or allowing or encouraging them to use their own initiative, she chides them and urges them to stick with the group, bored though they may be.

She remarks that unfortunately she has little time to give individual attention. Nevertheless, she does confer with individual students a lot, calling them to her desk during seat work in class or asking them to come up for a minute before or after class. The main focus of these mini-conferences seems to be more behavior-related than academic; she is usually talking to students about getting the work done, rather than the quality of their work. She did mention one example of working with a student about a specific problem. This student always tries to write a lot for essay tests and he writes very slowly, so he has difficulty finishing his tests.
She has worked with him regarding strategies for taking essay tests, trying to show him that length is not as important as concise presentation of the main points, explaining that in college he won't be able to write as much.

B. Diagnosing group needs

This is one of her major purposes in using various types of assessment. Through oral questioning she checks to see if the students have done the assignment and if they've understood it, going over in class the reading or study questions she assigned the previous day. She orally checks the results of a quiz, asking "How many got 3 or less wrong?" "How many did better because they used their books?" "How many didn't use their books?" She then determines whether or not she'll allow them to use books the next time. She looks over their written study questions and may spend more time on one aspect if the group results are not what she expected. For example, most of the Freshman Language Arts class did not do a good job identifying characters who had been good or bad influences on the main character in Great Expectations and describing the values they held. This caused her to modify her teaching plans (see G. below). At another point she could tell (by the lack of participation in class discussion) that many of the students weren't keeping up with the reading. So she decided to dedicate some class time to letting them get caught up (something which she doesn't often do).

C. Assigning grades

Assigning grades is not the major purpose of this teacher's assessment activities, although she dutifully does it and it occupies a considerable amount of her time (see VI. Description of teacher and assessment, B. Teacher's expenditure of time). She exclaims that she has a real problem with grades--they measure nothing, except how hard you work. Grades label kids, put them in categories that don't always fit. She feels it's sad if a kid tries his hardest and still gets a C and thus is labeled a C student. She says she talks to her classes at the beginning of the year and tells them she'd be happy if they all got A's. When asked the purpose of grades, she throws up her hands and says "I don't know!" She then goes on to say they're a way to get you into college or law school. She notes that grades are very important at this school. Good grades bring status. The school's honor society is really big.

She notes that as a student teacher she learned about three grading systems: a numeric scale (1,2,3,4), pass/no pass, and points. She prefers a point system so that students aren't focusing on their grade all the time. If they want to know what letter grade they have, they have to ask. She also thinks the point system is easier to manage and get computerized. She assigns points to a task based on the nature of the task. For example, in-class work usually receives no more than 20-30 points unless it's a worksheet that was done over the course of a week, in which case it's worth 50 points. Tests are usually worth at least 100 points. In general, in her two American Literature classes, homework is worth about 30% and tests 60-70%.

Overall, the work of the third quarter represents about 40% of the final semester grade, the fourth quarter another 40%, and the semester test 20%. Final grades are based on a percent of the total number of points possible, not on a curve: 90-100 = A, 80-89 = B, 70-79 = C, 60-69 = D, Below 60 = F. She does not flunk many students. Last quarter only two students out of all her classes flunked, and that was mainly because of attendance problems. (See VIII. Policy and Assessment section for the school's attendance policy.) She does allow for some extra credit work, but rarely. She also uses pluses or minuses in assigning final grades. If a student is on the border, she considers attitude and participation to tip the balance. However, how she assesses these factors is not clear. She has no written records regarding class participation, for example.

What does she look for in students' work when she assigns points? Understanding of the subject matter and whether they followed directions. She says on regular assignments she usually assigns a global score if they did the work and gives half the points if the work is incomplete. She notes there isn't much variation in points because the main purpose of the assignment is to use it for discussion. I did see some variation in scores on study question papers handed back in American Literature: Out of a total of 30 points, 15 was the lowest for incomplete; then scores varied in increments of 5 points from 20 to 25 to 30. (Unfortunately, I did not have the opportunity to analyze the contents of the papers to understand the differences in scores.)

D. Grouping for instruction

I did not see this.

E. Identifying students for special services

She notes that in her Freshman Language Arts class, a couple of students were having trouble with writing and listening. She looked up their scores on the grade school screening test to check her perceptions (but did not recommend them for special services). She also notes that she used writing samples in her writing class last year to determine students' needs for change in placement; some moved from regular to advanced classes.

F. Controlling and motivating students

In general, the students in these classes are much more controlled and well-behaved than in the classes I observed in Language Arts Case 1. Even so, the lack of concentration and the amount of disrespectful behavior was surprising to me. Students would talk back or mimic the teacher from time to time, though this was not an everyday occurrence and the climate in the classroom when this happened indicated that most of the class members were aware that this was unacceptable behavior which was likely to cause a reprimand. I was also surprised at the occasional need to remind students to bring a pen or pencil to class--this is high school, junior level, and after a year of classes. (This was also a problem from time to time in the Language Arts Case 1 classes.)

Although this teacher has been teaching for five years, she looks, and sometimes acts, very young. She seems quite strict at first, commanding her students' attention ("All right now, listen up!" in a loud, authoritative voice). It is apparent that she has been compelled to do this to maintain the distance between herself and her students, particularly the boys, who regularly test her. However, sometimes in what may be attempts to be a friend or comrade to her students she gets off track and initiates conversation that distracts students from their work and breaks down those authority barriers she has constructed.

During most of the class time I observed she effectively controlled her students, using various forms of assessment both to control and to motivate them. She uses oral questioning to keep students on task during class discussions as well as to let them know that they need to be keeping up with the work. She uses the threat of a quiz to get them to settle down and study, and she warns them that if they don't keep up on their reading they'll really have a difficult time because they'll be having quizzes as they go along. She did a very nice job of using discussion questions before they had begun to read The Great Gatsby to stimulate their interest in what they were about to begin.

She also uses points as a motivator, even though she doesn't like to emphasize grades. For example, when only 12 out of 25 in the Freshman Language Arts class turned in their study guide questions on time, she chided them that it was important both for the points and because they would be required to know some of those things later. In mini-conferences she conducted with each student at mid-term, the subject of the amount of points a missing piece of work was worth came up frequently. On one occasion when she had cornered a student to talk about doing better, he asked her "What will 30 points do for me?" In her Mass Media class (which is the least well-behaved and most difficult to motivate to do the work) she noted that an assignment on making advertisements was worth somewhere between 50 and 100 points, "so do a good job on it!" (In that same class, she threatened to give F's if a group of boys actually demonstrated the use of Copenhagen snuff as part of their ad.)

G. Evaluating instruction

This is a major purpose of her assessments. She uses oral questioning effectively to determine the need to go into something in greater depth or to change her approach to teaching it. For example, when she found that most students had answered a question improperly (see B. above), she not only discussed this fact in class, but changed her teaching method from class discussion and individual work to small group discussion and group work on the question. She also uses quizzes to check the results of daily class discussions and assignments. She notes that quizzes are not so important in terms of their weight in assigning final grades; rather, they are part of daily activities. Thus, for her, their main purpose seems to be to keep the kids on track and help her evaluate instruction. Tests, on the other hand, are the real key to seeing if the students are understanding. (She says she tests every 2-3 weeks.)

She maintains a planned pace, even skipping some sections while reading aloud in class so that they could cover the material she had planned for that day. In this sense, she is not as flexible as the Language Arts Case 1 teacher and/or does not need to adjust her pace as often. This may be due to the level of students here, or to the level of her instruction and her expectations and the depth of her personal evaluation of the way the instruction is going--probably a combination of these factors.

H. Communicating achievement expectations

She definitely communicates her achievement expectations through various forms of assessment, often subtly, but also very overtly. She may specifically state that study questions will be useful to them later because they'll be tested over some of the same issues. She also admonishes them to keep their quizzes because they will help them to study for the final exam. Particularly with regard to essay tests, she feels it is important to prepare the kids. She'll give them 10 questions and tell them that she'll ask 5 of them on the test. She does this because she feels they need to be prepared--some thought needs to go into essay topics. On one occasion when no one knew the answers to her oral questions she threatened (half-joking, half-serious) that they might have to have a quiz (thus communicating that she expected more of them).

She also communicates her expectations regarding achievement via written comments on papers she hands back. These are usually merely one or two words ("Good" "Excellent" "Good insights" "Good response"), but she occasionally says more: "Some good insights--you seem to have a good understanding of Fitzgerald" or "A little more detailed, otherwise a good basis" or "A little sketchy, (name), did you fall asleep doing this?"

I. Communicating affective expectations

She uses oral questioning, quizzes or the threat of quizzes, and the threat of assignment of lower grades to let students know when they aren't behaving properly. The most common application of assessment to this purpose is during class discussions when students aren't paying attention. The examples have been noted above (especially in F.).

J. Providing test-taking experience

This was not observed and not mentioned in interviews. The only possible hint of this purpose came up in her discussion of the student who writes long essays and needs to learn that length isn't everything (see A. above).

K. (see form)

II. ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

A. Assessment of achievement

1. Teacher-developed paper and pencil tests and quizzes

For her American Literature and Mass Media classes, this teacher writes her own quizzes and tests. She notes that teachers also share tests and materials a lot and some of the worksheets and quizzes in American Literature are shared. She places heavy emphasis on tests and believes the tests she gives are hard--the kids tell her they are. However, she says she doesn't compare notes with other teachers. She thinks she's a fair teacher, "fun but firm," and has heard that freshmen think they have "lucked out" if they get her as a teacher.

(See above regarding the weight of her tests and frequency of testing. See section II.A.13. below regarding the cognitive levels of questions in her tests.)

2. Text-embedded paper and pencil tests and quizzes

During my observation time, she was using text-embedded quizzes and tests in her Freshman Language Arts class, which was studying Great Expectations. Her reason was that she thought that these materials were really pretty good. (See II.A.13. below regarding cognitive level of text-embedded test and quiz questions.)

3. Performance assessments

I did not see any performance assessments. According to her gradebook, last quarter and this quarter in Freshman Language Arts they had to do speeches, which were worth 50 and 100 points. However, we did not discuss how she evaluated them. In the American Literature classes there were no big papers to be written. One or two essays (as part of a major test?) were noted in her gradebook, but they were of minor importance in terms of points. She noted that if they were writing a paper, they would do lots of pre-writing activities, so that the essay would be so set up for them by the time they wrote it they would simply have to follow the format.

The one real performance assessment was the school-wide Writing Festival going on while I was there. Unfortunately, I did not get to see the results. In all of her classes (including Mass Media) and in other classes as well, students were "encouraged" to participate and even given class time in which to write something. The pieces were being judged by outside experts. In her gradebook the only mark regarding participation in the Writing Festival is a check.

In her Mass Media class they began another performance assessment while I was there, but I did not get to see the actual performance. The students were working in small groups to develop an advertisement, either written or enacted. As noted earlier, she was going to assign between 50 and 100 points to this activity, but I did not have the opportunity to discuss with her what criteria she would use in evaluating this group activity. (This relates to 6. below also.)

4. Oral questioning strategies

Oral questioning is a big part of her teaching style, both in her language arts/literature classes and in the Mass Media class. She seems to be pretty skillful with this assessment method, keeping the class moving at a quick pace, trying to keep students alert and participating. She notes the need for making a conscious effort to call on a lot of different kids so the same ones ("very bright") don't talk all the time. She also allows a lot of spontaneous responses. Although the pace is fast, she does wait for a response and at times even lets a good discussion get going among the students to whet their interest before she jumps in to channel it.

As 13. below shows, her oral questions represent a variety of cognitive levels. She asks a lot about plot (recall) to check their reading and a lot of interpretive (inference) questions. She also calls for some evaluation, but does relatively little with analytical or comparative oral questions. She does not keep written records of these oral assessments, however.

5. Standardized tests

Regarding the competencies for high school graduation, she commented that they are a useless waste of time. Some students don't pass them till they are juniors or seniors; the tests just hang over them as they take them over and over again. The only other use of standardized testing mentioned was when she noted having looked up the grade school screening test scores of a few students (see above).

6. Group assessment methods

As mentioned in 3. above, I observed the beginning of a group assessment, but did not stay long enough to see it carried out and did not get a clear idea from her about how she would evaluate it. She herself had not decided how many total points to give the activity.

7. Opinions of other teachers

I do not know the extent of her knowledge of the opinions of other teachers. We did not discuss this and I did not see evidence of it in her work, except when she reported back to the classes about what the substitute said when she attended the NCTE conference. However, she is a "regular," and a popular one, in the English teachers' lounge, and eats lunch in the lunchroom with other teachers. She is very sociable and does talk shop and personalities.

8. Assessment of reasoning skills

Since our interview time turned out to be more limited than my time with the teacher in Language Arts Case 1, I didn't have the opportunity to explore this in depth with her. Both teachers I observed wanted to pass on to their students an appreciation and understanding of good literature. However, unlike the other teacher whose purpose in teaching explicitly included teaching the kids to think and pull things together, this teacher's stated purpose did not go much beyond "appreciation and understanding." Teaching them to think may be an implicit, unstated goal of hers, however. Regarding homework, for example, she says that she looks at it to see if they're really thinking about what they wrote and not just jotting down a quick answer. I did not find out if she consciously uses any kind of taxonomy in developing her assessment questions. As 13. below indicates, her oral questions, the study questions she devised and the text-embedded study questions she used went beyond simple recall to tax higher level cognitive skills. Unfortunately, she did not test for those higher level skills; both the text-embedded quizzes and tests and those of her own devising focused primarily on recall.

9. Regular assignments

Study and discussion questions are a way of life in all of her classes, and she writes most of the questions she uses. She employs study questions not only as a way of assessing whether or not her students are doing the work and understanding, but also as a study guide tool for them. She reminds them to hang onto the question sheets, bring them to class, and use them to study for tests.

Generally, students are expected to work on these assignments in class. She views homework as merely an avenue for finishing what they are doing in class, rather than a separate entity--a management tool more than a grading device, a way to keep the kids on track and not let them get behind. When she does assign "homework" it is usually just reading. She does not give homework more than 2-3 nights per week and tries not to assign anything for the weekend. With regard to her Mass Media class, she notes that the subject matter is not conducive to homework and the kids in that class won't do any anyway, so it is self-defeating to assign it. When her students do written homework, she looks for indications that they are writing about what was discussed in class and that they're really thinking about it, not just answering quickly. In terms of her grading system, in American Literature, for example, homework (or class written work) represents less than a third of the grade, whereas tests and quizzes account for two-thirds. Interestingly enough, however, when I asked her who was the better of two students selected at random from each of her classes, one of the factors she described in explaining her choices was whether or not they did their homework and if they took time with it. (See 13. below for the cognitive level of her study questions.)

She sometimes imposes a time limit on a regular assignment to get the students to settle down and concentrate. For example, in Mass Media she'll threaten "Let's go...I have to have those papers by the end of the period." She has a basic policy on timeliness regarding regular assignments. If a task is due on a certain day, it can be turned in up until 3:00 p.m. of that day without loss of credit. If it is turned in later, the student will only receive half credit for it. The exception to this policy is that if they are planning to discuss something in class and a student hasn't finished the assignment, he or she cannot turn it in after the discussion because it isn't fair to the students who've done the work in advance. She says she explains her rules at the beginning of the year, so the students know her expectations.

10. Student peer ratings

She has students correct each others' papers in class, but this does not amount to peer-rating because no judgment is required. I don't believe she uses this method of assessment formally. Regarding informal use, I did observe her talking with one student about how others had done on a test. The student had come in to ask about his own score and then asked who got the highest grade, venturing a guess as to who he thought it would be. She told him some of the highest grades and he responded with surprise or disgust. When he was surprised she asked if that student had studied for it. However, on another occasion, a student was "snooping" in the gradebook, looking at other students' grades and she was upset with him and remarked to me later that she hated it when he did that.

11. Student self ratings

I did not observe this.

12. (See form)

13. Cognitive levels of questions posed

(See attached sheet.) According to this analysis of the questions used during my observations, it appears that she uses mainly recall and inference questions with her freshmen, and a little more variety of cognitive level questions with juniors and seniors. Curiously enough, the Freshman Language Arts text-embedded study questions contain the best balance of cognitive levels of anything she uses.

Of greatest interest in this analysis is the contrast between the levels of questions in tests and quizzes (both text-embedded and teacher-developed) and the levels in the study questions and oral questions. With the exception of the Mass Media tests which she developed, the tests and quizzes she used were almost entirely testing recall, even though she varied her inquiries much more in the other means of questioning. Since tests and quizzes have greater weight in terms of points toward a grade, students are getting greater rewards for use of lower level thinking skills then for use of higher order skills. (I believe she is unaware of this discrepancy.)

14. Strategies for integrating assessment and instruction

Assessment and instruction are integrated in her classroom primarily through her daily use of oral questioning and by working with the students in class to correct quizzes and orally discuss the results with them. She also spends much of her class time discussing the study questions they have been working on. I saw no evidence of peer editing.

15. Dealing with cheating

When students are taking a quiz, she routinely reminds them to cover their papers or turn them over when they're finished to protect themselves from wandering eyes. When I asked about test security, she replied that she has not changed the questions on her tests since she arrived at this school three years ago. She notes that quizzes don't count that much, and she never lets students keep the tests.

B. Assessment of affect

1. Observing individual students

Much of what this teacher has to say about individual students has to do with affect, rather than achievement. As noted in I.A. above, when she is getting to know them at the beginning of the year, the factors which help her size them up are behavioral--turning in papers, attending class, participating in discussions. (Of course, these are directly related to achievement as well.) She notes that a lot of what goes into a grade has to do with personality--"and you can't assess that!" The inherent contradiction beteween the effect of personality on a grade and the impossibility of assessing personality is not apparent to her. She feels that teaching English and grading are extremely subjective, not like math where things are either right or wrong. The amount that affective factors enter into her assessment of individuals is clearly evident in her comparison of two students selected at random from each class. When pushed to decide who was the better student of the two, the reasons she listed for her choice included comments like: gets the work done, tries hard, has a good attitude, is diligent, participates well in class, has good attendance, has shown significant improvement, has better test results. Only the last few of these are concrete indicators of achievement; the rest measure affect.

Some of these affective indicators can be easily documented--getting the work done and having good attendance, for example, are things on which she keeps written records. However, I saw no evidence in her gradebook of how she records attitude, level of effort (trying hard), or even class participation. Whether or not she samples behavior representatively is unclear. She has certain students in each class who are obviously more disruptive than others. Those students necessarily get more of her attention in class (though it's a negative kind of attention). As her remark about "personality" indicates, she seems to believe that affect is a fact of life in teaching and assessing literature classes (and Mass Media, too) and she does not seem to be too concerned about the difficulties or complications that entails. She has had no complaints about grades this year, and only one last year.

2. Observing group interactions

As she conducts her classes, she is continuously observing and controlling interactions among her students. Her classes require a considerable amount of group discussion. As noted above, she sometimes encourages or allows a rather free-wheeling group discussion (on the topic she has introduced) and sits back and enjoys the interaction as long as it's on task and civil.

She also occasionally asks a class to break into small groups to work on something. She then wanders around the room monitoring the interactions (but not taking notes). In Mass Media, when she had her senior boys work together to cut out pictures of advertisements, the opportunities for assessing affective traits were multiple. The teacher and I thought we were back in grade school. On another occasion, a fist fight broke out in the Mass Media class while I was observing. She and other students stopped it immediately and she later discussed it with the class (when the two participants were not present) and also talked with one of the boys involved privately to find out what was going on, noting that she was sorry to see that happen because he had been doing better (by what measures I'm not sure). It was the first time she'd ever had a fight in class.

By this time of the year she has clear ideas regarding students' attitudes and behavior patterns, many of which have been formed by observing students in classroom interaction. However, she keeps no written record of the affective factors that go into these perceptions, other than attendance and timeliness of work completion.

3. Using questionnaires

I saw none.

4. Using interviews (formal and informal)

As noted above, she conducts informal talks with students almost daily. These usually take place during class, while the group is reading or working on an assignment at their seats. The students targeted for these talks are usually (if not always) students who are not performing up to her expectations. She'll check to see what happened to an assignment or inquire about an unexplained absence or simply talk about an attitude problem or some disruptive behavior.

As noted also, she holds more formal talks with students at mid-term. These interviews are conducted quietly at the back of the room during class. The content of these is more achievement oriented, but she still must deal with a number of affective factors. She announced these mid-term talks in Freshman Language Arts the day she planned to conduct them. One girl reacted with panic, and the teacher calmly reminded them about how she does this, saying "I don't have a specific total but I can give you an idea (of how you're doing) and tell you what assignments you have missing." Basically these were little pep talks in this class, with a few reprimands about needing to be more disciplined in doing the work. She did not plan to spend as much time on mid-term consultations with her American Literature classes, and, in fact, I did not observe any other formally announced mid-term talks. In Mass Media she did some informal consultations with some of the students who were behind on assignments. She remained at her desk (on the opposite side from me) so I did not listen to these talks. However, one boy came back from her desk loudly protesting, "If I don't graduate, if I get screwed up, I'm gonna be ...(upset)!"

5. Opinions of other teachers

See II.A.7. above.

6. Opinions of other students

I have little evidence of this, except that she tends to chat with students and may ask, "What was wrong with ___ yesterday?" for example.

7. Opinions of parents

I did not get a very clear sense of what this teacher really knows about individual students' situations outside of class. She did not talk much about students' family situations or speculate about non-school related reasons for their behavior. She commented on the "great parent involvement" at this school but I saw no specific evidence of her contact with parents. At mid-term she sends out progress reports to the parents of kids who are getting D's or F's, and if time, to families of kids who are doing better. If there are serious attendance problems, she calls the parent.

8. Past student records

I found no evidence of her use of these in assessing affect nor any comments about having had some students before and thus knowing what to expect of them.

9. and 10. (See form)

C. Assessment of ability

This teacher rarely talked about the ability of her students in any overt way. It seems that she assumes that they are all capable of doing the work if they will just apply themselves to it. Even when comparing two students selected at random, she did not talk about their differences in terms of their abilities or potential. There was a hint of the concept of ability when she mentioned that one girl was better than another student because even though she didn't always turn her work in, she has a real desire to learn and to do what she can do (whereas the other was very complacent and would rather fall asleep). I asked how she forms her expectations regarding the potential of her students. They are based on whether or not the students turn in their work, attend class and participate in discussions.

As noted earlier, she did at one point refer to the screening test to check on some freshman students and she used writing samples to determine appropriate placement. However, she did not talk about these instances in terms of ability.

D. Text assessments

(See form)

III. CRITERIA FOR SELECTING ASSESSMENT METHODS

A., B. and E. Results fit purpose, method matches material taught, and origin of assessment

She seems to feel fairly confident that the assessment methods she uses match the material she is teaching and fit her assessment purpose. However, she might be rather surprised to see how much her tests and the text-embedded tests focus on simple recall. In the tests I saw, she used a lot of true/false and multiple-choice questions. These measure whether or not students have done the reading and can recall what they've read, but these kinds of questions are not so useful to measure "appreciation and understanding"--her stated goals.

Her assessment methods in the Mass Media class are somewhat more analytical, but whether or not she feels the subject matter differs from literature in this regard is not clear. She did say that the subject of Mass Media did not lend itself well to homework (which I do not understand).

She writes most of the assessments she uses. However, in Freshman Language Arts she uses tests supplied by the text, but only a very few of the study/discussion questions in the text. This is unfortunate, because the latter appear to be extremely well balanced in terms of cognitive levels taxed, whereas the tests are nearly all recall. She does not happen to use a taxonomy of cognitive skill levels in her selection of assessments.

D. and E. Ease of development and ease of scoring

This teacher maintains a rather fast, efficient pace. She has a quick mind and doesn't seem to search too deeply for answers to interview questions about teaching and assessment. I would expect ease of development to be important to her. However, the large number of true/false questions she has to write to make up a test are not really easier to do than a lesser number of more heavily weighted essay questions. Ease of scoring is definitely a consideration for her. She uses scantron answer sheets as much as possible--which of course is related to her use of true/false and multiple-choice questions. She also uses short answer essay questions. As noted, on study question written assignments she does not distinguish many levels of points, but evaluates the assignment rather globally (holistically?).

F. Time required to administer

Her quizzes are short. The tests that she wrote to be taken while the students had a substitute were rather long, (perhaps to be sure they kept busy?) and in fact some students complained about the length. She seems to have a fairly well-defined sense of how long things should take and follows a pre-planned schedule relatively closely.

G. Degree of objectivity

She remarked several times about the subjectivity of teaching and grading literature classes. This may be a reason for her use of objective, true/false and multiple-choice questions. However, she seems to feel confident that her grades are fair (recall her report that she'd only had one complaint last year).

H. Applicability to measuring thinking skills

As indicated in section II.A.13. above, she does employ questions that tap different cognitive levels. However, as her selection of test items indicates, this is not a major criterion in her choice of assessments.

I. Effective control of cheating

This is definitely not of major importance in her selection of assessment methods, as evidenced by the fact that she has not changed her tests for the past three years.

J. (See form)

IV. QUALITY OF ASSESSMENTS

(See form)

V. FEEDBACK PROCEDURES
(See form)

Here, as in Language Arts Case 1, it is important to consider the difference between feedback focused on achievement and that focused on affect in the context of oral feedback versus written. Far more written feedback (90%) is about achievement than is oral/nonverbal feedback (50%), due in large part to the nature of classroom interaction. In an active, modern classroom today, the teacher must spend a lot of time controlling disruptive interactions. The oral/nonverbal feedback that she gives must focus more on affect than does her written feedback. In her classes more oral feedback is aimed at boys than at girls simply because the boys tend to act out more (and in Mass Media there are far more boys). Similarly, her oral feedback tends to be a little more negative than what she writes because of the need to be controlling behavior in the classroom.

VI. DESCRIPTION OF TEACHER AND ASSESSMENT

A. Teacher's background

This teacher was trained in language arts education, then taught two years at another high school before coming to her present position. When asked about her training in assessment, she remarked there wasn't much to tell. In school the assessment training consisted of learning about standardized testing. The main places she learned what she knows today were when she was student teaching and in a methods class she took 3-4 years ago at a local college. She notes that her present school is very good about providing opportunities for teachers to get extra training and grow.

B. Teacher's expenditure of time

The amount of time she spends in preparation outside of class varies considerably, in part dependent upon the particular units she's teaching and whether or not she has taught the course before. The week before my observations she spent 10-15 hours outside of class because a lot of papers came in at once. The week I was there she had less to do.

C. Teacher characteristics

Role in the classroom: This teacher is young and works in a department in which the curriculum is "pretty set up," particularly the Freshman Language Arts curriculum (see VIII. Policy and Assessment, below). She has some control over the timing and order of the things she teaches, and in American Literature, for example, within an author she may choose one work over another. She has the greatest influence on curriculum in her Mass Media class--there she is shaping the curriculum herself.

Expectations of professional self: She thinks of herself as a professional, takes her job seriously, and takes pride in her work. She has "reasonable" expectations of herself, not too high and not too low. She seems to have balance in her life and tries not to allow her work to dominate all her time and energy. From comments she made from time to time to students about herself as a student and from observing her lack of knowledge of the vocabulary in The Great Gatsby, it appears that she may let herself off the homework hook occasionally. She is not concerned to know everything and be fully prepared, even when being observed by an educational researcher.

Structure needs: She follows a fairly structured pattern with her classes, yet is willing to try a different approach or activity occasionally.

View of high quality performance: Perhaps because she does not think of herself as a top student, she is empathetic with her students. She does not demand perfection. When she is certain of the answer, however, she demands correctness. If she is not sure herself, she may be a bit arbitrary (to cover her uncertainty) or may bend and accept several possible answers.

Stereotypic view of students: This teacher seems to enjoy her students. As she remarked to them when giving them some study advice, "I'm not so far from this you know," referring to her age and the few years she's been teaching. She seems to have a benevolent view of the kids, being pretty satisfied that they are basically good kids who do okay. The exception to this view is her Mass Media class. There she has a definite view that this class is full of senior boys who are taking it as an easy class and an opportunity to goof off. She sums up her opinion of this class by saying that almost no one in this class will be going on to a 4-year college.

Attends to exceptional student: As noted, she consults with students regularly about their performance, but does not feel she has time to give much individual attention.

Sense of performance norms: When asked about how she sets the standards for her classes, she responded "intuition" and then went on to say that she has determined that students must complete a certain amount of work for a particular class. She did not elaborate on how she sets the amount, but in talking about her Mass Media class she noted that this year is the first time she has taught this class and that last semester she taught it differently than this time. The current group of students is very different (less willing to work) than the previous class and she has changed her expectations regarding the work they'll do. Last semester they did a big group project; this time she won't expect that of them. She seems resigned and says she has come to realize that she isn't going to change their lives at this point (they are mostly seniors and this is May).

Orientation to experimentation: She is willing to take some risks. Putting scissors in the hands of the senior boys and asking them to work in small groups in front of an outside observer was taking quite a risk. She seems to feel confident and comfortable enough in her classes to try a little different approach once in a while.

Orientation to cheating: (See III. I. above.)

Amount of cheating: I don't know. I was not aware of cheating during quizzes. There was some collaboration going on when students were working on their study questions, but I doubt that is considered cheating. She did not keep tight control on visiting during those times. She does not seem to think cheating is much of a problem.

Value of promptness; importance of timely work completion: As noted in II. A. 9. above, she values timeliness and reduces the grade on assignments by half if they are turned in late. She permits make-up quizzes and tests if students have an excused absence.

Interpersonal environment of the classroom regarding assessment: Her classroom environment is primarily competitive with regard to formal assessments. However, she occasionally encourages group collaboration on a project.

Attributions for reasons of student success/failure: As noted, she fails very few students--only 2 last quarter out of all her classes. She attributes their failure to attendance problems. She takes responsibility for trying to do a good job teaching. She asks often if there are any questions and will re-explain or find a new way to present the material so that it is clear to the students.

Basis for grading students: (See I.C. above.) She feels grades measure how hard students work, but that is evidenced mainly by the work they complete. She goes primarily by points, allowing attitude to enter in only in borderline cases. This sounds very objective. However, as she notes, scoring literature essays is very subjective. The question is how much the affective perceptions she forms over the year enter into the scores she gives on daily assignments and essay tests and quizzes. Since I had little opportunity to really study complete sets of papers over time, I cannot answer this.

Interpretation of assessment: Final grades are based on strict percentages of total points possible. However, many of the individual tasks that are scored are scored rather holistically. She made no mention of reading through to determine what the overall results were before assigning grades on essay questions; her criteria are not clear to me. On daily assignments getting the point and completing the task may be enough to get full credit (see I.C. above). The objective parts of tests are of course criterion-referenced.

VII. TEACHER'S PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

This teacher seems to expect most of her students to do well. If they'll do the work, the assumption seems to be that they can do it. When questioned about any differences between her two American Literature classes, she thought they were pretty much the same, except perhaps one group had slightly better skills than the other. She illustrated this by citing the response of the better group to having her read aloud. They preferred to read on their own, whereas the slightly lower group wanted her to continue to read to them. This, however, could be the result of many factors, not necessarily ability or even achievement levels.

The biggest contrasts with regard to student characteristics can be seen in her views of her freshman class compared with the seniors in her Mass Media class. She acknowledges that the freshmen need encouragement and guidance regarding high school expectations, but she is very pleased with their progress, noting that 10 out of 25 are on the honor roll. At the opposite end are the Mass Media seniors. These contrasts relate to willingness to learn, rate of achievement, maturity, etc.--to most of the items in this section.

Study skills: In the American Literature classes, she is overtly encouraging better study skills by training them to take notes. They have boxes of note cards; she may even dictate some important points for them to write on their note cards--which they can then use for studying and sometimes even for taking a test. Her insistence of them keeping study questions and quizzes to study later is another example of training for good study skills.

Feedback needs: Thesetend to vary with the level of the students. She notes that the freshmen accept the limited information she gives them at mid-term and don't ask many questions. The juniors in American Literature, on the other hand, want to know how their points translate into grades. She notes that the kids in general do not like the fact that the first and third quarter grades are "progress reports" and don't count in one's cumulative grade. To them a grade is a grade.

Reaction to testing: In general, her students react to testing in a fairly typical way--with some concern or even panic. She notes that she herself has a hard time taking tests so she thinks that might make her more sympathetic toward her students. With the freshmen, in particular, she tries to make them comfortable about tests and doesn't give them any surprises. During observations she seemed careful in all her classes to give them advanced warning about the instruction schedule for the next few days and especially about any planned quizzes or tests.

Parental expectations: As noted earlier, she considers parental expectations to be high at this school. Parents plan for their kids to go on to college and expect the school to give them good academic preparation.

VIII. POLICY AND ASSESSMENT

Since this is the only high school in the district, school policies are the same as district policies for high school level topics and activities.

Testing: The school requires semester exams. She has her own rules regarding testing: She won't allow make-up tests on unexcused absences.

Reporting: Quarter grades ("progress reports") and semester grades are required. Mid-term reports are not part of school policy. She seems to have complete discretion regarding her grading system. The department does not impose a system or standards. Even among colleagues teaching the same class at the same level there is no agreement required. In American Literature she uses a points system; a colleague uses a pass/fail system.

Homework: No school or department policies. She has her own (due by 3:00 p.m. the day specified or receives half credit).

Attendance: The school requires maintenance of attendance records and has a dense, single-spaced page of rules about the attendance policy. After seven unexcused absences a student automatically loses credit for a course. The teacher feels this policy is problematic because students know they can have up to seven absences, and that even after that they can go before a board to explain. She feels that teachers are rather inconsistent regarding what they expect in attendance and many teachers feel their hands are tied to motivate kids.

Curriculum content: The English department has a very structured curriculum for Freshman Language Arts. There are at least 10 sections of this course, which is required freshman year. The course must consist of the following units: Short Story; Speech; Romeo and Juliet; Great Expectations; The Odyssey; and Poetry. However, there is some flexibility regarding the order in which these units are taught. Similarly, the curriculum for American Literature is pretty established. It is a year-long class, but only one semester is required. There are four teachers teaching this course. There are seven "regular" sections and two "advanced" (a full year is required if students take "advanced"). The first semester is focused on early American literature, the second on modern. The teachers meet as a group to plan their calendars. They must cover the same authors but have flexibility within the authors (in choice of story, for example), with pace and with order of presentation.

PROFILE OF LANGUAGE ARTS CASE #2

I. ASSESSMENT PURPOSES

A. Diagnosing individual student needs	Uninformed		X				Well informed
	Irrelevant					X	Relevant
	Useless			X			Useful
	Not used			X			Used frequently
B. Diagnosing group needs	Uninformed				X		Well informed
	Irrelevant					X	Relevant
	Useless					X	Useful
	Not used					X	Used frequently
C. Assigning grades	Uninformed			X			Well informed
	Irrelevant					X	Relevant
	Useless		X				Useful
	Not used		X				Used frequently
D. Grouping for instruction within class	Uninformed		Don't know				Well informed
	Irrelevant			X			Relevant
	Useless		Don't know				Useful
	Not used	X					Used frequently
E. Identifying students for special services	Uninformed			X			Well informed
	Irrelevant				X		Relevant
	Useless			X			Useful
	Not used		X				Used frequently
F. Controlling and motivating students	Uninformed					X	Well informed
	Irrelevant					X	Relevant
	Useless					X	Useful
	Not used					X	Used frequently
G. Evaluating instruction	Uninformed				X		Well informed
	Irrelevant					X	Relevant
	Useless					X	Useful
	Not used					X	Used frequently
H. Communicating achievement expectations	Uninformed				X		Well informed
	Irrelevant					X	Relevant
	Useless					X	Useful
	Not used					X	Used frequently
I. Communicating affective expectations	Uninformed				X		Well informed
	Irrelevant					X	Relevant
	Useless					X	Useful
	Not used					X	Used frequently

J. Providing test-taking experience	Uninformed	___ Don't know ___	Well informed
	Irrelevant	___ ___ X ___ ___	Relevant
	Useless	___ Don't know ___	Useful
	Not used	X ___ ___ ___ ___	Used frequently

K. Relative importance of purposes

Given "100 importance points" to distribute across the purposes listed below, how would you distribute those points to reflect the relative importance of the decisions listed?

Importance to the teacher:	
Diagnosing individual needs	5
Diagnosing group needs	20
Assigning grades	10
Grouping for instruction	0
Identifying students for special services	5
Controlling and motivating	12
Evaluating instruction	20
Communicating achievement expectations	20
Communicating affective expectations	8
Test taking experience	0
	100 points

II. ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

A. Assessment of Achievement

1. Teacher-developed paper and pencil tests and quizzes	Uninformed				X		Well informed
	Inappropriate					X	Appropriate
	Useless					X	Useful
	Not used					X	Used frequently
2. Text-embedded paper and pencil tests and quizzes	Uninformed			X			Well informed
	Inappropriate			X			Appropriate
	Useless			X			Useful
	Not used			X			Used frequently
3. Performance assessments	Uninformed		Don	't	know		Well informed
	Inappropriate		Don	't	know		Appropriate
	Useless		Don	't	know		Useful
	Not used		X				Used frequently
4. Oral questioning strategies	Uninformed					X	Well informed
	Inappropriate					X	Appropriate
	Useless					X	Useful
	Not used					X	Used frequently
5. Standardized tests	Uninformed			X			Well informed
	Inappropriate			X			Appropriate
	Useless		X				Useful
	Not used	X					Used frequently
6. Group assessment methods	Uninformed		Don	't	know		Well informed
	Inappropriate		X				Appropriate
	Useless		X				Useful
	Not used	X					Used frequently
	(During my observations)						
7. Opinions of other teachers	Uninformed		Don	't	know		Well informed
	Inappropriate		Don	't	know		Appropriate
	Useless		Don	't	know		Useful
	Not used		Don	't	know		Used frequently
8. Assessment of reasoning skills	Uninformed			X			Well informed
	Inappropriate					X	Appropriate
	Useless				X?		Useful
	Not used				X?		Used frequently
9. Regular assignments	Uninformed				X		Well informed
	Inappropriate					X	Appropriate
	Useless					X	Useful
	Not used					X	Used frequently

10. Student peer ratings

Uninformed		Don't know				Well informed
Inappropriate			X?			Appropriate
Useless		Don't know				Useful
Not used	X					Used frequently

11. Student self ratings

Uninformed		Don't know				Well informed
Inappropriate			X			Appropriate
Useless		Don't know				Useful
Not used	X					Used frequently

12. Proportion of all assessments for all purposes that are of various types

Teacher-developed paper and pencil tests & quizzes	20
Text-embedded paper and pencil tests & quizzes	10
Performance assessments	5
Oral questions	30
Standardized tests	0
Opinions of other teachers	2?
Regular assignments	30
Group assessments	2?
Student peer ratings	0
Student self ratings	1?
	100%

13. Cognitive levels of questions posed in:

	Study and Discussion Questions	Oral Questions	Tests and Quizzes
Recall			
	See attached		
Analysis			
Comparison			
Inference			
Evaluation			

14. Strategies for integrating assessment and instruction

Uninformed				X		Well informed
Inappropriate					X	Appropriate
Useless					X	Useful
Not used					X	Used frequently

15. Dealing with cheating

Uninformed				X		Well informed
Inappropriate					X	Appropriate
Useless					X	Useful
Not used				X		Used frequently

II.A.13. Cognitive levels of questions posed in:

	Study and Discussion Questions												Tests and Quizzes							
	Text-embedded				Teacher-developed				Oral Questions				Text-embedded				Teacher-developed			
	All	FLA	AL	MM	All	FLA	AL	MM	All	FLA	AL	MM	All	FLA	AL	MM	All	FLA	AL	MM
Recall	17%	17%	0	0	48%	33%	55%	15%	38%	46%	32%	45%	85%	85%	0	0	83%	0	89%	55%
Analysis	15%	15%	0	0	18%	4%	20%	35%	6%	0	9%	18%	0	0	0	0	6%	0	3%	24%
Comparison	16%	16%	0	0	3%	5%	2%	0	3%	0	6%	0	2%	2%	0	0	4%	0	4%	3%
Inference	28%	28%	0	0	27%	50%	22%	5%	42%	54%	36%	27%	4%	4%	0	0	6%	0	5%	14%
Evaluation	23%	23%	0	0	5%	9%	1%	45%	10%	0	18%	9%	9%	9%	0	0	1%	0	0	3%

FLA = Freshman Language Arts
AL = American Literature
MM = Mass Media

B. Assessment of Affect

1. Observing individual students	Uninformed				X		Well informed
	Inappropriate					X	Appropriate
	Useless					X	Useful
	Not used					X	Used frequently
2. Observing group interactions	Uninformed				X		Well informed
	Inappropriate					X	Appropriate
	Useless					X	Useful
	Not used					X	Used frequently
3. Using questionnaires	Uninformed		Don't know				Well informed
	Inappropriate			X			Appropriate
	Useless		Don't know				Useful
	Not used	X					Used frequently
4. Using interviews (formal and informal)	Uninformed				X		Well informed
	Inappropriate					X	Appropriate
	Useless					X	Useful
	Not used					X	Used frequently
5. Opinions of other teachers	Uninformed		Don't know				Well informed
	Inappropriate			X			Appropriate
	Useless		Don't know				Useful
	Not used	X					Used frequently
6. Opinions of other students	Uninformed		Don't know				Well informed
	Inappropriate		X?				Appropriate
	Useless		Don't know				Useful
	Not used		X				Used frequently
7. Opinions of parents	Uninformed		Don't know				Well informed
	Inappropriate				X		Appropriate
	Useless				X		Useful
	Not used		Don't know				Used frequently
8. Past student records	Uninformed		Don't know				Well informed
	Inappropriate		X				Appropriate
	Useless		Don't know				Useful
	Not used	X					Used frequently

9. Checklist of affective characteristics measured:

F	Seriousness of purpose
F	Motivation and effort
I	Attitude
	Learning style
I	Interests
I	Values
	Preferences
I	Academic self-concept
	Locus of control
I	Anxiety
I	Maturity
I	Social skills
I	Study skills
	Other (specify ____________________)

Code:
F = formal assessment conducted
I = informal assessment conducted

10. Relative importance of affective assessment methods:

Observing individual students	30
Observing group interactions	38
Using questionnaires	0
Using interviews (formal and informal)	20
Opinions of other teachers	5
Opinions of other students	2
Opinions of parents	5
Past student records	Don't know
	100%

C. Assessment of Ability

1. Meaning of ability for teacher

Value of this factor for the teacher — Important ___ ___ ___ _X_ ___ Unimportant

Measurement of ability

Measured formally _____
Measured informally _____ (See narrative)
Not measured __X__

Ingredients considered in assessment of ability, if measured.

FACTOR(S) INCLUDED IN ASSESSMENT	MEASURED HOW?
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

2. Check decisions influenced by results (i.e., change with varying levels of ability).

_____ Instructional objectives
_____ Instructional strategies
_____ Grouping for instruction (within class)
_____ Methods for measuring achievement
_____ Grading standards
_____ Students selected for special services
_____ Other (specify ______________________________)

D. **Text Assessments**

Checklist of assessment components provided with text
(Only for Freshman Language Arts)

Available	Used	
X	X	Oral questions for class use (only a few)
X	X	Homework assignments (only a few)
Don't	know	General assessment guidelines for teachers
X	X	Paper and pencil tests
Don't	know	Performance assessments
Don't	know	Scoring guidelines
Don't	know	Quality control guidelines
		Other (specify ______________________________)

For American Lit. I don't know what may be available. She does not use any text-embedded assessments.

For Mass Media, she uses a wide variety of materials (newspapers, magazines, movies, etc.) most of which do not have assessments as part of them. I don't know what is available. Here too she makes her own.

III. CRITERIA FOR SELECTING ASSESSMENT METHODS

A. Results fit purpose	Uninformed				X		Well informed
	Unimportant					X	Important
	Not used				X		Used frequently
B. Method matches material taught	Uninformed				X		Well informed
	Unimportant					X	Important
	Not used				X		Used frequently
C. Ease of development	Uninformed				X		Well informed
	Unimportant			X			Important
	Not used			X			Used frequently
D. Ease of scoring	Uninformed					X	Well informed
	Unimportant				X		Important
	Not used					X	Used frequently
E. Origin of assessment	Uninformed			X			Well informed
	Unimportant	X					Important
	Not used		X?				Used frequently
F. Time required to administer	Uninformed				X		Well informed
	Unimportant			X			Important
	Not used			X			Used frequently
G. Degree of objectivity	Uninformed			X			Well informed
	Unimportant			X			Important
	Not used			X			Used frequently
H. Applicability to measuring thinking skills	Uninformed			X?			Well informed
	Unimportant				X		Important
	Not used			X			Used frequently
I. Effective control of cheating	Uninformed			X			Well informed
	Unimportant				X		Important
	Not used				X		Used frequently

J. Relative importance of criteria

Results fit purpose	18
Method matches material taught	18
Ease of development	10
Ease of scoring	12
Origin of assessment	1
Time required to administer	7
Degree of objectivity	10
Applicability to measuring thinking skills	16
Effective control of cheating	8
	100%

IV. QUALITY OF ASSESSMENTS

A. Percent of paper and pencil assessments (teacher-developed or text-embedded) having the following characteristics (need not total 100%):

%
____ Clear description of assessment specifications
95 Matches content of instruction
60 Matches cognitive levels of instruction (More recall than in oral assessment)
90 Minimizes time required to gather needed information
75 Item format matches desired outcome
90 Items clearly written
90 Items sample domain
Don't know Scoring procedures planned--specified on some, not on most*
0? Scoring criteria written for essays
100 Clear directions
85 High quality reproduction--a few lines missing on one, some punctuation and spelling errors
90 Test scheduled to minimize distractions

B. Percent of performance assessments having the following characteristics:
Saw none

%
____ Clear description of trait to be measured with levels of proficiency articulated
____ Matches intended outcomes of instruction
____ Minimizes time required to gather needed information
____ Clear performance criteria
____ Students aware of criteria
____ Thoughtful exercises yield performance samples
____ Exercises sample performance domain
____ Performance rating planned
____ Results match information needs

C. Percent of oral questions having the following characteristics:

%
75 Sampling methods cover range of achievement levels of students
60 Strategies involve everyone
80 Teacher waits for response
80 Student's response given supportive reaction
75 Questions match cognitive levels of instruction
0 Written performance records maintained

* Since my observations were done at the end of the year, it may be that the students know by now how much a T/F or multiple choice or short answer question is usually worth.

V. FEEDBACK PROCEDURES

A. For oral and nonverbal feedback

Percent of feedback delivered to students who are:

%	
40	Strong (vs. weak)
40	Correct (vs. incorrect)
65	Male (vs. female)

Percent of feedback having the following characteristics:

%	
90	Delivered in class (vs. out of class)
90	Oral (vs. nonverbal)
75	Public (vs. private)
95	Fair (vs. unfair)
50	Focused on achievement (vs. affect) (getting the work done=affect)
95	Germane (vs. irrelevant)
95	Immediate (vs. delayed)
45	Positive (vs. negative)

B. For written feedback

Percent of feedback delivered to students who are:

%	
40	Strong (vs. weak)
50	Correct (vs. incorrect)
50	Male (vs. female)

Percent of feedback having the following characteristics:

%	
70	Comment (vs. symbol) (though often brief)
55	Positive (vs. negative)
95	Fair (vs. unfair)
90	Germane (vs. irrelevant)
90	Focused on achievement (vs. affect)

Uses samples of performance as feedback — Never ___ X ___ ___ ___ ___ Frequently

Announces names of highest scorers, but these are not really samples.

Uses public achievement chart as feedback — Never X ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ Frequently

VI. DESCRIPTION OF TEACHER AND ASSESSMENT

A. Teacher's background

1. Teacher experience, number of years:

5	Overall
5	At grade level (high school)
3	In school
5	With content (language arts/English)

2. Relative contributions of various sources to teacher's knowledge of assessment methodology

%	
15	Teacher preparation training
30	Inservice training
15	Ideas and suggestions of colleagues
0	Professional literature
0	Teacher's guide to textbooks--not sure
40	Own experience in classroom
100%	

B. Teacher's expenditure of time

1. Proportion of time spent in teaching activities

%	
15	Planning
13	Teaching (one on one)
40	Teaching (group)
30	Assessing (see list below)--includes oral questioning
2	Other (specify: Counseling)
100%	

2. Proportion of time spent in assessment activities (paper and pencil, performance assessment, oral, assignments)

%	
5	Reviewing and selecting assessments
20	Developing own assessments
30	Administering--including oral questioning
20	Scoring and recording
20	Providing feedback
5	Evaluating quality
100%	

C. Teacher characteristics

Role in the classroom	Curriculum maker and presenter	___ ___ ___ X ___	Servant of policy delivering required content

Expectations of professional self	Expects little			X			Expects a great deal
Structure needs	Rigid			X			Flexible
View of high quality performance	Correctness demanded			X?			Degrees of quality eval.
Stereotypic view of students	None			X?			Expressed often
Attends to exceptional student	Never		X				Frequently
Sense of performance norms	Unclear			X But not clearly stated			Very clear
Orientation to experimentation	No risks			X			Risk taker
Orientation to cheating	No concern			X			Major concern
Amount of cheating	None		Don't know				A great deal
Value of promptness; importance of timely work completion	Unimportant				X		Important
Interpersonal environment of the classroom regarding assessment:							
Cooperative	None		X				Frequent
Competitive	None					X	Frequent

Attributions for reasons of student success/failure:

75	Due to student
25	Due to teacher
100%	

Basis for grading students:

10	Level of effort
5	Sense of ability
85	Demonstrated achievement
100%	

Interpretation of assessment:

50	Norm-referenced
50	Criterion-referenced
100%	

VII. TEACHER'S PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

A. Ability to learn	Low				X		High
	No variation		X				Great deal
	Variation ignored		X				Addressed
B. Willingness to learn	Low			X			High
	No variation					X	Great deal
	Variation ignored				X		Addressed
C. Rate of achievement	Low			X			High
	Decreasing				X?		Increasing
	No variation					X	Great deal
	Variation ignored			X			Addressed
D. Maturity	Irresponsible			X			Responsible
	No variation					X	Great deal
	Variation ignored					X	Addressed
E. Study skills	Undeveloped		X				Developed
	No variation				X		Great deal
	Variation ignored		X				Addressed
F. Social skills	Undeveloped			X			Developed
	No variation					X	Great deal
	Variation ignored					X	Addressed
G. Willingness to perform	Reticent			X			Willing
	No variation					X	Great deal
	Variation ignored					X	Addressed
H. Feedback needs	Weak					X	Strong
	No variation				X		Great deal
	Variation ignored				X		Addressed
I. Self-assessment skills	Undeveloped		Don't know				Developed
	No variation		Don't know				Great deal
	Variation ignored		Don't know				Addressed
J. Sense of fairness	Unclear				X		Clear
	No variation		X				Great deal
	Variation ignored		X				Addressed
K. Reaction to testing	Tranquil					X	Anxious
	No variation				X		Great deal
	Variation ignored				X		Addressed
L. Parental expectations	Unclear					X	Clear
	Low					X	High
	Unimportant					X	Important
	No variation				X		Great deal
	Variation ignored				X?		Addressed

VIII. ASSESSMENT POLICY
(See attached table)

VIII. What policies influence classroom assessment?

ORIGINS OF POLICY

FOCUS OF POLICY

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	Federal	State	District	School	Department	Collegial
Testing	A. Does a standard exist? B. Does teacher know standard? C. Does it impact practice? How?	A. B. C.	A. B. C.	See text	A. B. C.	A. B. C.
Reporting	A. B. C.		A. B. C.	A. B. C. See text	A. B. C. See text	See text
Homework			A. B. C.	A. B. C.	A. B. C.	A. B. C.
Class Size			A. B. C.			
Selection Spec. Prog. and/or Recognition	A. B. C.	A. B. C.	A. B. C.			
Attendance			A. B. C.	See text		A. B. C. See text
Content to Be Taught (Inc. Text Selection)			A. B. C.	A. B. C.	A. B. C. See text	A. B. C.

SOCIAL STUDIES CASE STUDY #1

Background Information

A member of the social studies staff of a large high school in one of the city's more affluent neighborhoods, this teacher is responsible for three sophomore U.S. history classes and two senior accelerated economics courses. This is a magnet school for college preparation, attracting high achieving students from throughout the city in addition to the middle class children of the surrounding environs. The observation was conducted over two weeks in May 1986 and included interviews with the teacher and a visit to a Social Studies Department staff meeting.

The school day has a modular structure, most classes lasting 40 minutes, but some 20 and 60 minute periods built in for special courses. One day a week all classes are abbreviated to permit time for student associations to meet. Both American history and economics are required courses, though, of course, the choice of accelerated economics is optional and requires counselor approval.

The student body is predominantly white. Girls and boys are about equal in number in the history classes, but the accelerated economics is about two-thirds male, and the boys dominate discussion.

I. ASSESSMENT PURPOSES

A. and B. Diagnosing individual student needs/ Diagnosing group needs

Diagnosis of students, individual and group, is done primarily through a fall sizing up task and through review assignments that precede each test. In the fall, this teacher "gives a few exercises" that enable him to tell what skills the students are bringing to the class. Typically, these consist a map-reading task, a note-taking exercise, and a few direct questions. Results are not taken too seriously, since he finds that "there is consistency from group to group each fall."

Pre-test review exercises can function as a diagnostic instrument, although that is not their primary purpose. They are due the day of the test, so they do not affect test content or pre-test class emphases. Their primary diagnostic function is as a check, if the test results are generally bad, as to where the students might be falling down.

Diagnosis cannot have a major influence on this teacher's work, since the entire year's activity is closely blocked out in advance. Each chapter's homework, tests, make-ups, lectures, films, and speakers are designated in full detail in an individual file which the teacher has meticulously compiled. Each of the three history classes and both of the economics classes are nearly identical in content, pacing, and structure of the classroom interaction. These chapter files are complete dossiers from which to instruct and assess. Since this is not the first year with the text in American history and since the accelerated economics is predominantly text-independent, these plans have been used before to the teacher's satisfaction. Little adjustment is therefore made based on ongoing diagnosis. And, as reported above, the class cohorts are, in the teacher's estimation, quite similar from year to year and from one individual class to another.

C. Assigning grades

All written work is graded. With the exception of two or three more artistic products (e.g., a drawing of a civil war combatant) assigned during the year, history grades are derived directly from written assignments and tests. Assignments receive points and their due dates are set--all work for a unit or chapter must be submitted before the test over that material. Work not submitted on time is assessed as a zero. Tests are point-graded and all points placed on a curve, then grades assigned to show the general distribution of about 50% C's, 20% B's, 15% A's, 10% D's, and 5% F's.

In economics, as the term wears on, the class shifts from grades based primarily on tests and assignments to grades based on assessment of oral/written topical reports and unit tests. Four unit tests, one the final exam, and the report assessments make up the grade.

Some assessments are not taken into grading. The limited oral questioning that does occur is not recorded, but is noted merely as an assessment of on-task behavior. The teacher is strict about not taking such material into his grading practice, regarding it as part of instruction, not part of assessment. It does, however, factor for him when he considers how well he is doing his job of communicating the material to the students, but he does not alter instruction based on it. There is more that he wants them to know than is on the assignments and tests and the classroom observations give him an index of whether individuals or the group are getting just the minimum, i.e., the material assessed in writing, or if they are learning more than that.

D. Grouping for instruction within the class

Not done in history. In economics, the teacher groups strong and weak students together for oral report topics, thus assuring that all the students learn, since the stronger and more committed will teach the others.

E. Identifying students for special services

At this school teachers can and do make recommendations for special service placements, e.g., in and out of accelerated classes. This teacher has more than once recommended a student for removal from his accelerated groups, having ascertained that "they are unable to follow the structure" of the seminar-like course. He judges this through an inability to keep informed about current events as they pertain to the class. The course requires that students draw inferences and he judges this by asking them to draw conclusions about economics from current newspapers and news magazines.

F. Controlling and motivating students

Tests are clearly regarded by the teacher as motivational tools, assuring that the material is studied. Review assignments serve the purpose of forcing the students to go back over the chapter or unit in preparation for the test. Indeed, all assigments function for this purpose, evidenced by their deadline date for credit of the day of the relevant test. Indeed, the purpose of this teacher's work is to get the students to learn a certain body of material. In the accelerated econonmics classes this body of knowledge includes certain analytic and organizational skills. In U.S. history it is content and a more limited set of skills such as interpretation of maps and political cartoons.

Control in the classroom is only indirectly achieved through assessment. The teacher is strict, non-interactive, and maintains close control of classroom behavior by his demeanor. There is little use, for example, of oral questioning of the unruly to keep students on task. However, the teacher hands out homework assignments at the beginning of class and students who choose not to be attentive are kept busy and quiet working on their assignment. It does not appear that they must be secretive about this, just quiet and not annoying to others.

G. Evaluating instruction

Generally, as described in I.A-B., above, instruction is preplanned and not subject to alteration due to diagnosis of individual or group needs. Repetition and review are either part of the general preplan or not done. Since little class time is devoted to oral questioning, each session basically follows a lecture outline or, in economics, may be taken up by an assigned group report.

One aspect of instruction--assessment practice--was altered based on assessment outcomes. A number of history students who were not doing well on the chapter tests said that the review questions did not help them, because they did not comprehend an overview of the material. Since the textbook is topically, rather than strictly chronologically organized, the teacher responded to this complaint by devising an alternative to the regular review assignment (a series of questions covering the main points of the material). The alternative is a chart that the student fills out, telling for each event, when, by whom, for what reason, etc., it occurred. These are time-lined, so that the chronology of events emerges more clearly.

H. Communicating achievement expectations

Clearly, the written assessment tasks are the measure of the teacher's achievement expectations. He makes it clear that the students are being held responsible for a certain body of material and that assuring that is the purpose of the assessments. Oral questioning as an achievement measure is not articulated to the students.

The meetings with small groups for economics oral reports were not held during the observation period, so could not be directly observed, but the teacher reports that he uses them as occasions on which to make clear just what the expectations are, in both content and form of the presentation.

Students who do not speak clearly and authoritatively when presenting in economics may be interrupted by the teacher and asked to repeat with more force and assertion. The whole range of public speaking skills, including quickness in response to questions, are included in his comments to the presenters.

I. Communicating affective expectations

While turning back tests and assignments, the teacher makes affective comments, during observation only negative comments. For example, he might say to a student that his/her score (apparently a low score) reflects the level of attention that the student has been giving the class. The habitually tardy also get such negative comments when their papers are returned.

J. Providing test-taking experience

Not seen.

II. ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

A. Assessment of achievement

1. and 2. Teacher-developed paper and pencil tests and quizzes AND text-embedded paper and pencil tests and quizzes

This teacher develops all his own tests and quizzes. He states that the tests that accompany the text are too "rote", that they measure only recall and that that is not his goal. Occasionally he will "borrow" one of the "good" questions from the text. However, analysis of the test questions developed by the teacher indicate that his tests, too, are basically recall exercises. (See II.A.13, below.)

Testing in history takes place at the end of each chapter and each three-chapter unit. Since a chapter is covered in a week, each Friday is a test day. Quizzes are not given. Tests are point-graded and placed on a curve. The curve is based on an at least 50% correct score for a passing ('C') grade. Usually, the teacher reports, there are more 'A' and 'B' grades than 'D' and 'F' grades. Test grades and assignment scores are summed by some method not made clear in response to my queries to make up a final grade that is reported as a zero to four point scale.

In economics, a similar pattern of assignments and tests was followed early in the term, but later the students moved to oral reporting and tests are only given on unit basis--economics has a total of four short essay unit tests, including a final exam. The teacher had firm, though judgmental criteria for grading--"I have in mind what should be there"--and a student receives an 'A' if it is "all there", a 'B' for "a small amount missed" and a 'C' if there is "a lot missed". Since economics is an accelerated class, there are generally no grades below a 'C'.

In economics, material presented by students on reports becomes the basis for tests on those subjects. The teacher takes content notes during presentations.

3. Performance assessments

Performance assessment makes up a significant part of the assesment in economics. The reports are assessed, during presentation, on the basis of content covered, delivery quality, and ability to answer questions from the class and the teacher, in his words, "content and mechanics." The teacher takes notes during the presentation. Handouts, outlines of talks and a written summary are submitted to augment the performance assessment, resulting in a letter grade for the activity.

Although small groups work together on a single topic, each student takes responsibility for a subsection of the topic and is graded entirely independently. The quality of individual contribution is not hard to identify, says the teacher; he looks at the content, the delivery, "plus my own gut feelings of having worked with the group for a week before [the presentation] and observing the quality of the questions and answers." Willingness to participate actively in the discussion is a significant factor in the grade received by presenters. He finds a high correlation between students' ability to "speak off the cuff" and good scores on the exams, both indicating overall well-preparedness.

In history, performance is not regularly solicited, much less assessed. It is basically a lecture course, with regular written assignments. Map-reading tasks and the two or three "art assignments" given during the year would constitute the only examples which I could observe or discover through interview. The "art assignments," of which the drawing of a civil war soldier or other period character is an example, were graded for "effort," "interest taken" and "accuracy," although these terms were not further defined upon questioning.

In the economics oral reports a variety of factors appear to become part of the overall assessment. Speaking style, as manifested in confidence, ability to think quickly and respond immediately to questions from the floor, demonstrated effort (in the preparatory meetings as well as the reports themselves), etc. play a direct role and a role that the teacher acknowledges, though he would probably not regard them as affective, but rather as achievement indicators.

4. Oral questioning strategies

In history, little oral questioning was used, rather the teacher lectured on points within the material that he expanded on in great depth. Overview was to be gained from the reading and assignments. In a 40 minute class, the number of questions asked averaged less than two per period; some periods none were put to the class. Most were inferential--could they draw some conclusion or speculation from what he had just presented--and all were responded to by volunteers.

In economics, questioning was used to follow up on the oral reports. The class put questions to the reporters, both to review material that they were not sure they had understood and to ask presenters to offer further information or opinions. The teacher also asked questions, about four per period. Those observed were all directed at one of the presenters.

(See II.A.13, below, for cognitive levels of the questions.)

5. Standardized tests

Not used. There will be a social studies minimum competency tests from the state soon; the social studies staff at this school is not in favor. However, they are working to prepare questions and general scope of the test drafts, in order to shape it, if possible.

6. Group assessment methods

Although economics oral reports are prepared by small groups, each student is assessed individually. (See also II. A. 3., above.)

7. Opinions of other teachers

This teacher shares opinions about individual students freely with his colleagues, although he does not feel that such information influences his own view. He does take recommendations from colleagues into consideration when evaluating for placement in accelerated classes.

8. Assessment of reasoning skills

Although the teacher stresses that his purpose in assessment is to evaluate achievement and, if questioned, he responds only with examples that would be categorized as content learning, he is also looking for other types of skill development and, at least in accelerated economics, is assessing on the basis of them. Success in economics is in part measured by a student's ability to "understand the structure of the course." That is, the student must be able to organize material, draw out the most important points from readings, draw conclusions and make inferences about it when questioned in class. The few questions put to the class in history were inferential queries, although none of the assessment activities called for this skill. There are ambiguous messages about the importance reasoning skills given out in these classes and lack of clarity about what is demanded in the assessments, at least in economics.

9. Regular assignments

Along with the weekly teacher-developed tests, assignments form the core of assessment in history. There are assignments "practically every day," all written for submission and point grading. A "basic assignment" is "reading text and answering questions in writing." Before each test there is a "summary" task that serves as a review. These may be submitted as responses to questions the teacher sets or, as described in I.G., above, an outline chronology. Assignments are to be turned in the following day, but will be credited if turned in before the test on the material they pertain to. Students have the right to request a rewrite, if they turn their work in long enough before the test to have the rewrite completed.

Most assignments are questions to be answered, although map completion is also frequent. These map assignments are basically replications of maps in the text. Editorial cartoons are also given out with questions to be answered about them. Much of this daily work is from materials accompanying the text. Almost all of it is recall work. One of the students reflected on the class work, noting that "it's always the same" and, in fact, that observation seems accurate.

10. Student peer rating

Not seen.

11. Student self ratings

Not seen.

12. Proportions of all assessments for all purposes that are the various types

U.S. history and accelerated economics are assessed very differently, as the percentage list shows. The teacher sees the sophomores in history as less mature and also less interested. He teaches them the necessary subject matter. The seniors in the advanced economics he attempts to challenge and also expects them to be willing to take more responsibility for their own learning.

13. Cognitive levels of questions

This teacher acknowledges that he does not feel completely confident about his ability to assess, though not with reference to the different cognitive levels. He would like to have professional development on this topic. "I feel," he says, "that I'm too subjective, even though lots of scores go into it."

14. Strategies for integrating assessment and instruction

Seen only in the oral reports in the economics class. See II. A. 3., above.

15. Dealing with cheating

Make up tests are always different from the regular test. They require short essays, rather than objective answers, so they cannot be copied from another student who has taken the test. During tests the teacher constantly monitors the room, walking around and watching the students, occasionally asking someone to move further from neighbors.

B. Assessment of affect

It seems to me that we need some parallel to the first question under "Assessment of Ability," i.e., the relative importance of this to the teacher. In this case, I would rate affect as of quite little value to him, and far higher for the other social studies teacher.

Generally, this teacher distances himself from any consideration of affective variables in his assessments. He is careful to assign points and/or grades to written or presentation work. He admits no other factors in his grading process. There is no hint of extra credit work or raising of grades for students who ask to rewrite their assignments--the second point result is simply substituted for the first attempt.

1. Observing individual students

Very little attention is paid--the teacher lectures, using the same lecture regardless of the attentiveness, skills, etc. of the students. The single example that suggests attention to affective factors of individual students is the creation of the alternative review schema for those students who complained that they just couldn't get the facts straight. The teacher felt they had weak study skills and this matrix format would assist them. The alternative assignment is assessed as equally sufficient work.

2. Observing group interactions

Seen only in the economics oral report groups. Part of the teacher's assessment of individuals' contribution to the group and therefore their grade for the project is the assertive role they take in the small group's meeting with him. Similarly, responses to questions asked by classmates are observed and evaluated by the teacher.

3. Using questionnaires

Not seen.

4. Using interviews (formal and informal)

This teacher does not spend a great deal of time one-on-one with his students. He readily answers questions before and after class, but few students seek him out, nor does he encourage this. He thinks they should go to counselors with general academic or personal problems. The economics students must have one or more meetings with him in preparation for their reports; these become part of his basis for assessing the final product.

5. Opinions of other teachers

This teacher listens thoughtfully to his colleagues, but draws his own conclusions.

6. Opinions of other students

Not seen.

7. Opinions of parents

In this school most parents are actively involved in their children's education, are attentive to homework, push their children to achieve. This teacher does not seek out parents' opinions, nor regard them as important input in any decision he makes. If there are problems, he follows the school policy for written parent contact, but does not see them unless they come in to meet with the counselor and request his presence.

8. Past student records

The teacher does not report any reference to past student records.

9. Affective characteristics measured

These factors are considered in the oral report grading, but they are "clear", in his words, from the interactions prior to the report and the presentation itself and do not, in the teacher's point of view, present difficulty for objective assessment.

C. Assessment of ability

1. Meaning of ability

General cognitive skills that enable a student to comprehend the intent of an assignment or reading and to interpret it in order to complete it successfully.

This teacher tries (and is confident he succeeds) to assess purely on the basis of achievement. In history, this means learning a body of knowledge and becoming able to learn from non-textual materials such as maps, historic photos, and cartoons. In accelerated economics, he expects students to achieve a variety of cognitive skills (interpretation, analysis, comparison, argumentation, organization of material), as well as a certain body of information. But all these he would place under the umbrella of achievement and assess as such.

III. CRITERIA FOR SELECTING ASSESSMENT METHODS

A. and B. Results fit the purpose AND method matches material taught

Generally, his recall questions do ascertain if the students have studied the material. This is the paramount issue with this teacher. Commenting on the revised review assignment option he said he was glad he'd designed this alternative, since "Their scores improved and that, of course, is my goal." Certainly recall questioning suits the pedagogy of lecture about factual matters.

C.-F. Ease of development AND ease of scoring AND origin of assessment AND time required to administer

These tests are easy to write, though it takes some consideration to be assured that the entire domain is sampled; they are easy to grade; and they can be administered in a class period. Since, in history, one day a week is given over to testing, this last is an important factor. Further, time is given to review of the test when it is turned back; up to 20 minutes is spent on going over the questions and putting up the point results and the curve.

Make-up tests are short essay, with specific points assigned to each essay and the teacher can readily state just what information has to be there to get credit, so these, too, are easy to score. The teacher reports that he does correct for bad writing on assignments, sometimes requiring rewrite, but this is not done on tests nor is it factored into scoring.

This teacher draws most of his regular assignments from materials provided with the text and develops his own tests. It is important to him that the tests not be known to the students, so origin of the test is a factor.

G. Degree of objectivity

This is a most important factor with this teacher. Although he has a well-planned, highly quantifiable grading strategy and tests that are predominantly objective (multiple choice, reorder, matching, fill in the blank), he worries that he is "too subjective." His comments on this subject indicate that he feels the best way to correct for this is to assess often, but that may not be sufficient.

Some of these assessment quality concerns may reflect his evaluations of the economics reports, which are certainly more judgmental. However, he does not admit that the factors which he uses to evaluate those reports are other than readily observable, evaluable, achievement indicators.

H. Applicability to measuring thinking skills

This is an important consideration for this teacher. He eschews use of the text-embedded tests because they are "too recall". His tests, he says, sample all levels of skills. Analysis of the teacher-developed tests, however, indicates that almost all of his questions, like those in the text, are recall. Thus, this teacher is not able to correctly apply an assessment principle that he himself regards as critical.

I. Effective control of cheating

Cheating is handled through use of a different test for make-up. It is short essay, rather than objective questions, so papers cannot be borrowed. There does not seem to be any concern on the part of this teacher that assignment work is shared. Indeed, he comments that some of the students who ask for the alternative review assignment work them up together. The assignment work must be completed to get credit and, he feels, students must comprehend it in order to do well on the tests. That is sufficient monitoring.

IV. QUALITY OF ASSESSMENTS

[I have construed the percentages as proportional ratings.]

A. Paper and pencil assessments

Scoring criteria for essays: All the "essays" on regular tests are short written answers and they are awarded 5 points. Make-up tests consist of longer essays, usually 4 or 5, given 5 points each. Grades for tests are derived from letters or the 4-point scale, so total number of points for the test is irrelevant. The essays are all recall; the teacher "knows what should be there" and assigns points. He marks for style, spelling, etc. on assignments (and sometimes requires a resubmission), but these are not considered on tests.

Match between content and instruction was high, in the sense that the teacher lectured the facts and then asked for facts back on the tests. The assignments were also predominantly factual, especially the review assignments to prepare the students for the tests. There was, however, a marked difference between the content of instructional lectures and the material on assignments and tests. For classroom lecture, the teacher selected certain aspects to describe in detail (e.g., a battle line in World War I, the assassination at Serajevo) which did not appear on the tests. They cannot be interpreted as focussing on the most important issues, simply as interesting incidents selected for some other reason. The students appeared to be aware of this, for only those who were interested in the topic were paying attention. Thus, with regard to whether the items sampled the domain, yes, they did clearly do so with regard to the text material, although the lectures did not point to that.

Scoring procedures were fully planned and articulated to the students. The placement of the cuts on the curve was generally set at 50% of the points for a 'C', although this went up to nearly 60%, if the class scored generally well.

B. Performance assessments

The only performance assessments seen were the oral reports in economics and the written versions turned in.

The teacher took notes openly during the presentations, making it clear that he was evaluating. However, the notes were on the content of the presentation, he reported. Performance factors included in the evaluation were not recorded simultaneous with the presentation.

Generally, the teacher had criteria in mind, including achievement, affective, and ability. It did not appear that these had been fully communicated to the students and, in fact, he was not aware that they were not all achievement criteria. The overall quality of speaking itself was an important evaluation variable, yet this had been communicated to the students largely in far more specific terms, such as the direction to speak from notes, rather than reading. No rating system existed for these reports, to my knowledge.

Further, students did not appear to realize that they were also being graded on the basis of their answers to questions from their peers. Often they passed such a question on to a fellow presenter, when they could have answered it too. That is, they did not active competitively in this regard, although they were being judged, not as a group, but individually. They did try to answer the teacher's questions to the best of their ability.

As to the written version of the report that the students turned in, it appeared to be less important than the classroom performance and it was difficult to ascertain what criteria went into judging the essay. The only description I got was that used for paper and pencil assessments, i.e., that "it all needs to be there". Students did not appear to have a clear idea of how the components—oral presentation, question answering, and written report weighed in the overall assessment.

C. Oral questions

There was very little oral questioning in these classes. In history, questions averaged less than 2 per period. All were answered by volunteers; no scoring or other records were maintained. Questions were inference, i.e., could the student take the presentation the teacher was engaged in one step further. This contrasted with the basically recall assessment environment and the generally factual content of the lectures.

There was almost never any verbal response to a student's answer; the teacher simply moved on in the lecture or, in economics, moved on to his next question to the student presenter.

V. FEEDBACK PROCEDURES

A. Oral and nonverbal feedback

This teacher is remarkably without affect. He varies his tone of voice, his facial expression little. There is almost no eye contact with the class. Even admonishments to misbehaving students are very controlled. Indeed, in the few cases in which such control actions were necessary, he quietly moved up to the offender, without even being noticed, and spoke in a quiet manner that conveyed strong approbation, even barely controlled anger. Such actions had a strong effect on the individual and the class. The class was generally quiet and, if many were not tracking the lecture, they were quiet and under control.

Students responses to questions rarely evoked verbal comment or even nonverbal comment. The teacher asked a few questions of the economics oral report groups and sometimes made a general comment, such as "thank you," "that covered it," and, once, "good work" when the group's time was up. Interestingly, he reported to me that he gave the economics report groups feedback immediately after they finished presenting--apparently regarding these brief comments as sufficient feedback.

On the relative importance of feedback to the teacher, this case is very low and the case of the other social studies teacher is very high.

B. Written feedback

Some students' assignments got written comments, especially in the "essay" sections, where language problems were noted. The written feedback was minimal, but certainly appropriate where used.

VI. DESCRIPTION OF TEACHER AND ASSESSMENT

A. Teacher's background

2. Two courses in college.

This teacher would like more training in assessment and evaluation and specifically hoped this would be an outcome of participation in the project.

B. Teacher's expenditure of time

Here I have construed "teaching activities" to exclude time spent in and out of class on non-instructionally-related activities, such as reading announcments.

2. Note that assessments are developed before the term starts and all work is fully laid out. Assignments are not developed by the teacher usually, but drawn from text materials; some tests are used from year to year.

The following addresses how students' time is spent, at least their in-class time (for which we have data). In these classes time usage breaks down as follows:

HISTORY

Instruction	70%	(Lecture is 90% of this; oral questioning 10%)
Assessment	38%	(One day a week is testing, i.e., 20% of all class time; tests and grading are reviewed in class; assignments are not discussed in detail)
Other	2%	(Little class time is used for other purposes)

ECONOMICS

n.b. Results would be different at the beginning of the term, before oral reports are the main activity.

Instruction	20%	(Teacher follow-up to report topics; teacher expansion on questions he asks presenters)
Assessment	75%	(Student oral reports constitute about 70% of this total*; also unit tests; teacher questioning of presenters)
Other	5%	(Occasional guest speakers, as well as minor other factors)

* I have counted the oral reports as assessment, although they were the primary instruction on the topics as well.

C. Teacher characteristics

This teacher highly values his autonomy as a professional in charge of his own classroom. His comments on his and his colleagues' opposition to testing standards indicate this. He sees it as his responsiblity to communicate the base content of the subject matter and how he does it is his decision. He also commented that most of the social studies teachers are not happy with the text in current use because it is non-chronological and, while some of his colleagues just don't use the text, he chooses to do so since he likes to have a text.

These are highly structured classes, activities fully laid out in advance. The only deviations from pre-planned structure that I observed were the invitation of one guest speaker in economics (although the idea of occasional guest speakers is part of the term plan, just when they will come is left open) and adjustment of the order of group report presentations due to student absence from class.

The teacher expects students to become part of the classroom process, following the regular pattern of the weeks, knowing what is expected of them, and taking repsonsibility for themselves. He does not try to make overtures to students to motivate them, nor seek to know why they do not perform. This self-responsibility or maturity factor appears to be an important part of what he tries to teach students in his classes. Thus, he sees his responsibility as ending when the material is presented and assignments and tests are clearly set and fairly administered. Students' failure to learn becomes their own choice. Notably, he is open to amending assessment, if students bring their difficulties to him, as he did when a group requested a different review assignment in history.

The teacher is committed to assessing on the basis of achievement, but, in fact, takes in some affective and ability variables as well.

The curve system used for grading is partially criterion referenced, i.e., 50% is the minimum ever required for passing. The economics class is graded on a 'C' minimum. The economics tests are curved, but the oral reports are criterion-graded.

VII. TEACHER'S PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

The teacher generally regards most of these factors as either irrelevant or things that he should not pay attention to. His general approach appears to be to refuse to cater to student insecurities, variation, etc., in order to motivate them to rise above these things and take responsibility for learning the material of the course. His students get little feedback, but he feels he gives feedback.

Teacher's definition of success: Measured overtly only in achievement terms. The students have mastered a specified set of material. He has fairly and accurately evaluated and reported their progress. And, though not expressed, he looks for the students to grow in ability motivation to do independent work.

VIII. ORIGINS OF POLICY

Testing

State: Minimum competency test in preparation, not yet used.
Department: The department is working cooperatively to prepare a position for input to the state wide competency test; it has as its policy that individual teachers should decide their own requirements--"We fought long and hard for academic freedom," says the subject teacher.

Reporting (AND Grading)

District: District requires grade reporting 4 times for 9-week periods. They do not require that a specific grade be tied to some specific percent. District also provides a "comments report," computer form with 20 affective and achievement comments to select from.
School: Recommends that 50% be a passing mark minimum on any test.

Homework

School: Teachers must send work home for any student who falls behind, then contact counselor, and, at third stage, request meeting with parents, student and counselor.
District: District policy is that schools must set up some procedure for consultation with parents by 5th or 6th week of a grading period in which a student is not completing sufficient work to expect to pass.

Class Size

District: There are "guidelines" but the union has not yet succeeded in setting contractual limits.

Selection for Special Programs and Recognition

District: Establishes criteria for accelerated and skills emphasis students and places primary responsibility on counselors.
School: Counselors select students for special programs, but teachers can make recommendations and expect that their recommendations will probably be followed. Teachers can dismiss unqualified students from their accelerated track classes, if they cannot or will not do the work.
Departmental: The department staff selects all students for special recognition through vote at its weekly meeting.

Attendance

District: Policies are generally set by the district.
School: Absence, lateness rules are clearly set by the school and teachers are expected to adhere to them. Some teachers serve as hall monitors to intervene directly with tardy students.

Content to be Taught

State: Approves a list of acceptable texts to be selected from by the districts.
District: Approves a list of texts to be selected among by the schools.
Department: Entire staff reviews and selects by vote among the offered texts. Teachers may deviate from the text (especially in accelerated classes like economics, in which current periodicals are a major content source), but many not use a different text.

Discipline

District/School: All discipline procedures are specified by the district and applied to building conditions by the school administration. Building policy on what constitutes an excused or unexcused absense is firm.
Department: By consensus the department arrives at methods by which to assure that activities out of school which they authorize are categorized as excused absences.

NOTE ON THE RELATION OF POLICY AND ASSESSMENT: Law Day

Each year the social studies department sponsors a "Law Day" in which a large number of students participate. Members of the senior applied law class and other social studies students have the opportunity to spend the day at the courthouse, observing trials, hearing lectures by members of the legal profession, and, generally, exploring the legal system and legal profession. Each year the social studies department encounters reluctance on the part of the foreign language department staff to sign the forms required to excuse Law Day participants from their classes. If students cannot secure an excuse from their classroom teachers, they are not--according to strict school policy--eligible to make up missed work. If, for example, a test is held on Law Day, unexcused students get a "zero" for the test. In past years some students who failed to get excuses have suffered rather severely from "zeros" on quizzes that the social studies faculty regards as having been scheduled specifically to punish Law Day attendees.

This year, the social studies faculty feels it is in a stronger position to secure excuses for the Law Day students, since the foreign language program has a major event coming up shortly thereafter which will require excuses for student attendance. If Law Day excuses are not forthcoming, the social studies faculty will withhold excuses for that event in retaliation.

However, the faculty had concerns about students' behavior during Law Day and the legitimacy of getting excuses for the many students who leave the event shortly after it starts, hanging out in an adjacent park instead of attending events, or who simply don't show up at all. Should they take attendance at the event? And, if so, at more than one point in the day? This would assure attendance, since students not reporting would be unexcused and therefore punished through ineligibility to turn in homework or make up tests for the day. The social studies department, after discussion, decided not to try to take attendance at Law Day, since reporting the widespread absence would damage the chances of continuing to secure excused absence forms from non-social studies faculty, leading, eventually, to the actual attendees of Law Day being punished for participating in a legitimate, sponsored event. It was better to not monitor, than to risk invoking school policy which counts absence negatively in student assessment.

PROFILE OF SOCIAL STUDIES CASE #1

I. ASSESSMENT PURPOSES

A. Diagnosing individual student needs	Uninformed		X				Well informed
	Irrelevant					X	Relevant
	Useless			X			Useful
	Not used		X				Used frequently
B. Diagnosing group needs	Uninformed		X				Well informed
	Irrelevant					X	Relevant
	Useless		X				Useful
	Not used	X					Used frequently
C. Assigning grades	Uninformed		X				Well informed
	Irrelevant					X	Relevant
	Useless				X		Useful
	Not used					X	Used frequently
D. Grouping for instruction within class	Uninformed		X				Well informed
	Irrelevant					X	Relevant
	Useless	Hist			Econ		Useful
	Not used	Hist			Econ		Used frequently
E. Identifying students for special services	Uninformed		X				Well informed
	Irrelevant				X		Relevant
	Useless				X		Useful
	Not used			X			Used frequently
F. Controlling and motivating students	Uninformed		X				Well informed
	Irrelevant				X		Relevant
	Useless		X				Useful
	Not used			X			Used frequently
G. Evaluating instruction	Uninformed		X				Well informed
	Irrelevant	X					Relevant
	Useless		X				Useful
	Not used	X					Used frequently
H. Communicating achievement expectations	Uninformed		X				Well informed
	Irrelevant				X		Relevant
	Useless			X			Useful
	Not used			X			Used frequently

I. Communicating affective expectations

Uninformed		X				Well informed
Irrelevant			X			Relevant
Useless	Hist		Econ			Useful
Not used	Hist			Econ		Used frequently

J. Providing test-taking experience

Uninformed		X				Well informed
Irrelevant		X				Relevant
Useless	X					Useful
Not used	X					Used frequently

K. Relative importance of purposes

Given "100 importance points" to distribute across the purposes listed below, how would you distribute those points to reflect the relative importance of the decisions listed?

Diagnosing individual needs	2
Diagnosing group needs	2
*Assigning grades	60
Grouping for instruction	2
Identifying students for special services	2
Controlling and motivating	13
Evaluating instruction	1
Communicating achievement expectations	15
Communicating affective expectations	3
Test taking experience	0
	100 points

*40% grades; 20% measure achievement.

II. ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

A. Assessment of Achievement

1. Teacher-developed paper and pencil tests and quizzes	Uninformed			X			Well informed
	Inappropriate					X	Appropriate
	Useless					X	Useful
	Not used					X	Used frequently
2. Text-embedded paper and pencil tests and quizzes	Uninformed			X			Well informed
	Inappropriate					X	Appropriate
	Useless		X				Useful
	Not used		X				Used frequently
3. Performance assessments	Uninformed	X					Well informed
	Inappropriate						Appropriate
	Useless	Hist				Econ	Useful
	Not used	Hist				Econ	Used frequently
4. Oral questioning strategies	Uninformed	X					Well informed
	Inappropriate					X	Appropriate
	Useless			X			Useful
	Not used		X				Used frequently
5. Standardized tests	Uninformed		X				Well informed
	Inappropriate			X			Appropriate
	Useless	X					Useful
	Not used	X					Used frequently
6. Group assessment methods	Uninformed		X				Well informed
	Inappropriate				X		Appropriate
	Useless	X					Useful
	Not used		X				Used frequently
7. Opinions of other teachers	Uninformed				X		Well informed
	Inappropriate				X		Appropriate
	Useless			X			Useful
	Not used			X			Used frequently
8. Assessment of reasoning skills	Uninformed		X				Well informed
	Inappropriate					X	Appropriate
	Useless					X	Useful
	Not used		X				Used frequently
9. Regular assignments	Uninformed			X			Well informed
	Inappropriate					X	Appropriate
	Useless					X	Useful
	Not used					X	Used frequently

10. Student peer rating

Uninformed	X					Well informed
Inappropriate				X		Appropriate
Useless	X					Useful
Not used	X					Used frequently

11. Student self ratings

Uninformed	X					Well informed
Inappropriate				X		Appropriate
Useless	X					Useful
Not used	X					Used frequently

12. Proportion of all assessments for all purposes that are of various types

	History	Econ
Teacher-developed paper and pencil tests	60	40
Text-embedded paper and pencil tests	5	0
Performance assessments	0	30
Oral questions	2	10
Standardized tests	0	0
Opinions of other teachers	0	0
Regular assignments	33	15
Group assessments	0	5
Student peer ratings	0	0
Student self ratings	0	0
	100%	

13. Cognitive levels of questions posed in:
(N.B. Restatement of categories)

	Assignments*	Study and Discussion Questions		Oral Questions**		Tests and Quizzes***	
		Text-Emb.	Teach.Devl.	History	Econ	Actual	Make-up
Recall	70%	74%	100%	--	28%	99%	70%
Analysis	--	6%	--	--	28%	--	--
Comparison	20%	2%	--	--	17%	--	30%
Inference	--	4%	--	100%	5%	1%****	--
Evaluation	10%	14%	--	--	22%	--	--

* Both text-embedded and teacher-developed.

** N here is extremely small; little oral questioning occurs.

*** Actual tests are fill-in, multiple choice, setting events in chronological order, matching sets, and short essays of 5 points value. Make-up are all short essay.

**** In one instance only, in accelerated economics, a single inference question was included.

14. Strategies for integrating assessment and instruction	Uninformed		X				Well informed
	Inappropriate					X	Appropriate
	Useless			X			Useful
	Not used	X					Used frequently
15. Dealing with cheating	Uninformed		X				Well informed
	Inappropriate				X		Appropriate
	Useless		X				Useful
	Not used		X				Used frequently

B. Assessment of Affect

1. Observing individual students	Uninformed		X				Well informed
	Inappropriate				X		Appropriate
	Useless			X			Useful
	Not used			X			Used frequently
2. Observing group interactions	Uninformed	X					Well informed
	Inappropriate				X		Appropriate
	Useless			X			Useful
	Not used			X			Used frequently
3. Using questionnaires	Uninformed	X					Well informed
	Inappropriate				X		Appropriate
	Useless	X					Useful
	Not used	X					Used frequently
4. Using interviews (formal and informal)	Uninformed		X				Well informed
	Inappropriate				X		Appropriate
	Useless	X					Useful
	Not used	X					Used frequently
5. Opinions of other teachers	Uninformed			X			Well informed
	Inappropriate				X		Appropriate
	Useless		X				Useful
	Not used		X				Used frequently
6. Opinions of other students	Uninformed			X			Well informed
	Inappropriate			X			Appropriate
	Useless	X					Useful
	Not used	X					Used frequently

7. Opinions of parents

Uninformed		X				Well informed
Inappropriate				X		Appropriate
Useless	X					Useful
Not used	X					Used frequently

8. Past student records

Uninformed		X				Well informed
Inappropriate				X		Appropriate
Useless	X					Useful
Not used	X					Used frequently

9. Checklist of affective characteristics measured (considered):

X Seriousness of purpose
X Motivation and effort
X Attitude
___ Learning style
___ Interests
___ Values
___ Preferences
X Academic self-concept
___ Locus of control
X Anxiety
X Maturity
X Social skills
___ Study skills
X Other (specify: confidence)

Code:
F = formal assessment conducted
I = informal assessment conducted
X = Not measured

10. Relative importance of affective assessment methods:

Observing individual students	60
Observing group interactions	10
Using questionnaires	0
Using interviews (formal and informal)	6
Opinions of other teachers	10
Opinions of other students	0
Opinions of parents	2
Past student records	2
	100%

C. Assessment of Ability

1. Meaning of ability for teacher
   Value of this factor for the teacher — Important ___ ___ ___ _X_ ___ Unimportant

   Measurement of ability
   Measured formally ____
   Measured informally ____
   Not measured _X_

   Ingredients considered in assessment of ability, if measured:

	FACTOR(S) INCLUDED IN ASSESSMENT	MEASURED HOW?--none really measured
1.	Verbal ability	Public speaking in oral reports
2.	Concentration	General on-task behavior, questions asked
3.	Spacial ability	Quickness with map-reading tasks
4.	Organizing capability/ability to comprehend overall principles	Structure of oral econ reports and econ report handouts
5.		

2. Check decisions influenced by results (i.e., change with varying levels of ability).

   ____ Instructional objectives
   ____ Instructional strategies
   _X_ Grouping for instruction (within class)
   ____ Methods for measuring achievement
   ____ Grading standards
   _X_ Students selected for special services
   ____ Other (specify ______________________________)

D. Text Assessments

Checklist of assessment components provided with text

Available	Used	
X		Oral questions for class use
X	X	Homework assignments
X		General assessment guidelines for teachers
X		Paper and pencil tests
		Performance assessments
X		Scoring guidelines
		Quality control guidelines
		Other (specify ______________________________)

III. CRITERIA FOR SELECTING ASSESSMENT METHODS

A. Results fit purpose	Uninformed		X				Well informed
	Unimportant					X	Important
	Not used					X	Used frequently
B. Method matches material taught	Uninformed	X					Well informed
	Unimportant					X	Important
	Not used					X	Used frequently
C. Ease of development	Uninformed			X			Well informed
	Unimportant			X			Important
	Not used				X		Used frequently
D. Ease of scoring	Uninformed		X				Well informed
	Unimportant		X				Important
	Not used				X		Used frequently
E. Origin of assessment	Uninformed			X			Well informed
	Unimportant				X		Important
	Not used			X			Used frequently
F. Time required to administer	Uninformed			X			Well informed
	Unimportant					X	Important
	Not used					X	Used frequently
G. Degree of objectivity	Uninformed	X					Well informed
	Unimportant					X	Important
	Not used					X	Used frequently
H. Applicability to measuring thinking skills	Uninformed	X					Well informed
	Unimportant					X	Important
	Not used					X	Used frequently
I. Effective control of cheating	Uninformed			X			Well informed
	Unimportant			X			Important
	Not used				X		Used frequently

J. Relative importance of criteria

Results fit purpose	20
Method matches material taught	20
Ease of development	5
Ease of scoring	10
Origin of assessment	2
Time required to administer	15
Degree of objectivity	10
Applicability to measuring thinking skills	15
Effective control of cheating	3
	100%

IV. QUALITY OF ASSESSMENTS

A. Percent of paper and pencil assessments (teacher-developed or text-embedded) having the following characteristics (need not total 100%):

%	
90	Clear description of assessment specifications
60	Matches content of instruction
60	Matches cognitive levels of instruction
90	Minimizes time required to gather needed information
80	Item format matches desired outcome
90	Items clearly written
90	Items sample domain
95	Scoring procedures planned
See notes	Scoring criteria written for essays
90	Clear directions
90	High quality reproduction
90	Test scheduled to minimize distractions

B. Percent of performance assessments having the following characteristics:

%	
10	Clear description of trait to be measured with levels of proficiency articulated
30	Matches intended outcomes of instruction
50	Minimizes time required to gather needed information
70	Clear performance criteria
30	Students aware of criteria
50	Thoughtful exercises yield performance samples
30	Exercises sample performance domain
40	Performance rating planned
30	Results match information needs

C. Percent of oral questions having the following characteristics:

%	
30	Sampling methods cover range of achievement levels of students
10	Strategies involve everyone
95	Teacher waits for response
20	Student's response given supportive reaction
30	Questions match cognitive levels of instruction
10	Written performance records maintained

V. FEEDBACK PROCEDURES

A. For oral and nonverbal feedback

Percent of feedback delivered to students who are:

%
70 Strong (vs. weak)
70 Correct (vs. incorrect)
70 Male (vs. female)

Percent of feedback having the following characteristics:

%
95 Delivered in class (vs. out of class)
30 Oral (vs. nonverbal)
90 Public (vs. private)
90 Fair (vs. unfair)
90 Focused on achievement (vs. affect)
90 Germane (vs. irrelevant)
90 Immediate (vs. delayed)
70 Positive (vs. negative)

B. For written feedback

Percent of feedback delivered to students who are:

%
50 Strong (vs. weak)
50 Correct (vs. incorrect)
50 Male (vs. female)

Percent of feedback having the following characteristics:

%
20 Comment (vs. symbol)
40 Positive (vs. negative)
90 Fair (vs. unfair)
90 Germane (vs. irrelevant)
95 Focused on achievement (vs. affect)

Uses samples of performance as feedback — Never ___ X ___ ___ ___ Frequently

Uses public achievement chart as feedback — Never ___ X ___ ___ ___ Frequently

VI. DESCRIPTION OF TEACHER AND ASSESSMENT

A. Teacher's background

1. Teacher experience, number of years:

21	Overall
21	At grade level
21	In school
	With content

2. Relative contributions of various sources to teacher's knowledge of assessment methodology

%	
10	Teacher preparation training
0	Inservice training
10	Ideas and suggestions of colleagues
2	Professional literature
2	Teacher's guide to textbooks
86	Own experience in classroom
100%	

B. Teacher's expenditure of time

1. Proportion of time spent in teaching activities

%	
25	Planning
2	Teaching (one on one)
51	Teaching (group)
20	Assessing (see list below)
0	Other (specify ______________________________)
100%	

2. Proportion of time spent in assessment activities (paper and pencil, performance assessment, oral, assignments)

%	
10	Reviewing and selecting assessments
30	Developing own assessments
18	Administering
35	Scoring and recording
5	Providing feedback
2	Evaluating quality
100%	

C. Teacher characteristics

Role in the classroom	Curriculum maker and presenter	X					Servant of policy delivering required content

Expectations of professional self	Expects little					X	Expects a great deal
Structure needs	Rigid	X					Flexible
View of high quality performance	Correctness demanded	X					Degrees of quality eval.
Stereotypic view of students	None		X				Expressed often
Attends to exceptional student	Never			X			Frequently
Sense of performance norms	Unclear					X	Very clear
Orientation to experimentation	No risks			X			Risk taker
Orientation to cheating	No concern		X				Major concern
Amount of cheating	None			X			A great deal
Value of promptness; importance of timely work completion	Unimportant					X	Important
Interpersonal environment of the classroom regarding assessment:							
Cooperative	None		X				Frequent
Competitive	None				X		Frequent

Attributions for reasons of student success/failure:

70 Due to student
30 Due to teacher
100%

Basis for grading students:

5 Sense of ability
95 Demonstrated achievement
100%

Interpretation of assessment:

50 Norm-referenced
50 Criterion-referenced
100%

VII. TEACHER'S PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

A. Ability to learn	Low			X			High
	No variation				X		Great deal
	Variation ignored	X					Addressed
B. Willingness to learn	Low			X			High
	No variation					X	Great deal
	Variation ignored		X				Addressed
C. Rate of achievement	Low			X			High
	Decreasing			X			Increasing
	No variation					X	Great deal
	Variation ignored		X				Addressed
D. Maturity	Irresponsible			X			Responsible
	No variation					X	Great deal
	Variation ignored		X				Addressed
E. Study skills	Undeveloped			X			Developed
	No variation			X			Great deal
	Variation ignored		X				Addressed
F. Social skills	Undeveloped			X			Developed
	No variation				X		Great deal
	Variation ignored	X					Addressed
G. Willingness to perform	Reticent			X			Willing
	No variation				X		Great deal
	Variation ignored	X					Addressed
H. Feedback needs	Weak		X				Strong
	No variation			X			Great deal
	Variation ignored	X					Addressed
I. Self-assessment skills	Undeveloped			X			Developed
	No variation			X			Great deal
	Variation ignored	X					Addressed
J. Sense of fairness	Unclear			X			Clear
	No variation		X				Great deal
	Variation ignored	X					Addressed

K. Reaction to testing	Tranquil			X			Anxious
	No variation			X			Great deal
	Variation ignored	X					Addressed
L. Parental expectations	Unclear				X		Clear
	Low					X	High
	Unimportant			X			Important
	No variation		X				Great deal
	Variation ignored	X					Addressed

SOCIAL STUDIES CASE STUDY #2

Background Information

This social studies teacher is on the staff of a four-year high school that serves an urban, working class neighborhood. This observation was conducted on 10 days in April and May, 1986. Interviews with the teacher took place prior to, during, and after the observations.

He teaches five classes daily, three junior-level American history courses and, in the latter half of the year, two senior economics courses. In addition, the teacher is responsible for holding one period of study hall. The school day is made up of eight class periods, each lasting 46 minutes, and a brief lunch break. The first period is extended by six minutes to serve as the homeroom period for announcements and related activities.

All are courses required for graduation. In 1985-86 this teacher has all general courses, although he usually has had at least one accelerated group. However, each class has a few "Skills Emphasis" students. These are individuals who have been identified by school counsellors as needing extra attention to their writing (he offers a Southeast Asian boy as an example). For these students the teacher prepares and offers opportunities to rewrite assignments, extra writing work and extra-credit work, and more extensive written comments on work submitted for grading. These students are identified only on the class lists and are not themselves aware of the designation.

The students in the subject teacher's classes are approximately 65% white, 30% black, and 5% non-white immigrant, predominantly Southeast Asian. Girls and boys are present in about equal numbers.

I. ASSESSMENT PURPOSES

A. Diagnosing individual student needs

At the beginning of the year, usually during the first class week, the teacher gives all his classes two writing assignments that he uses to size up the students. These are short-essay exercises, "less factual than opinion and evaluation questions" from which he draws conclusions about students' level of interest. It does not, he points out, measure their ability. One assignment is completed in class, the other is a homework task. The latter gives more opportunity to those who are slower thinkers or writers and the former assures that it is the students' own work and ideas.

This year the sizing up assessment consisted of three questions, all having to do with current events. If the assignment were given during the period of the observation, he offered by way of example, he would have asked the students to discuss the American bombing of Tripoli, an event very much in the news at the time. He is testing for "what they know" and "general competency." This contrasts with social studies case #1, a teacher who has a sense of graduated ability.

Having administered his own assessment, he then compares these results with school records of some students' overall achievement and reading grade level. "I'm suspicious of reading ability" discrepencies, he reports, and histories of frequent absence from school. The combinations of his own assessment and student records give him "an identification of where they should be" in the class.

These conclusions can, he explains, override the results of any specific disappointing assessment outcomes during the year, since "I KNOW what their performance has been and that they CAN do it, but don't." He follows up with such students in conference.

Regular homework assignments and tests are also used to diagnose individual student needs, however the expectations are generally set from these early sizing up activities. If shifts in quality of work are noted, the teacher requests a conference with the student.

B. Diagnosing group needs (See also I.G.--this is overlap)

Lessons in these classes were largely outlined in advance and the class proceeded through the material on a pre-set schedule. Therefore, little evidence was seen of use of assessment to diagnose needs of the group for recapitulation, further explanation, etc. The teacher, however, contended that he did repeat material "in a new guise," if assessment results revealled that many of the students had not learned important subject matter. He described this process as one in which he reevaluates questioning strategies, reemphasizes the critical points when reviewing for the test and--most importantly--retests the material. That is, the students are retaught and retested without overt reference to the repetition. He says he doesn't say he's repeating because students will think it is boring or feel he is saying they were stupid to not get it the first time.

C. Assigning grades

This teacher was recommended to the study by his principal because he is well-known for the clarity and completeness in his grading system. Grades are highly salient in this classroom. Students regularly ask questions about grading; the teacher frequently discusses grading.

The grading system is a cumulative total of points for the year. At the point the observation began, there were 1,273 possible points from assignments and tests thus far in American history. Economics was at about 600 points, since it is a half-year course.

At different points during the observation the teacher offered two different synopses of the basis for his grading. In the first interview he reported grading approximately one-third each on homework assignments, tests, and projects. In a later discussion he offered one-third each from tests, assignments, and class participation as the breakdown. By school policy there is a final exam in American history. His final can constitute up to 30% of the year's grade, but it is usually more like 10% of the point total. During the observation, points were assigned for tests, homework, responses to questions posed in class discussion, and oral report projects.

Students are very concerned with their point standing. The teacher has restricted inquiries about point totals to once a week and many students availed themselves of times such as in-class reading to go up and ask for their grade standing. The teacher maintains an accessible assignment book with extra copies of homework that absent students are required to consult when they return to school. They then have one or two days to submit the missed assignments. Work not made up counts as zero in the point total, but students can negotiate these terms with the teacher if there is good cause why they cannot complete all the work. Students who are not satisfied with their grades are offered opportunities to undertake extra credit projects. These cannot make up more than 10% of the student's point total.

It remained somewhat mysterious what the teacher included in "extra credit." In response to interview questions, he described only extra work opportunities, but when handing back tests noted twice that, "There was no extra credit and that's the way I like it."

D. Grouping for instruction in class

This was rarely done. The teacher reported that he assigned students to small groups for oral reports based on his assessments. But, it was less on the basis of homo- or heterogeneous achievement or perceived ability, than the hope that an industrious student would motivate a less interested classmate to do the work.

E. Identifying students for special needs

This teacher would do this, if he were authorized, and believes his sizing up assignment would provide a valid basis. However, counsellors have the responsibility of grouping and teachers' recommendations, according to the informant, are rarely followed. So, he doesn't try to get students replaced very often any more. He does speak with a few students each fall to encourage them to apply for accelerated placement, sometimes successfully.

One example that the teacher gave of the problem of an improperly placed student was of an outspoken class member whom he characterized as "dominating" and using "gapping logic." In an advanced class, these problems would be addressed, so he would get the help he needs. He had tried to pursuade this boy to take accelerated history, but he had not wanted to shift his placement, since the school year had already begun. The teacher thinks he lacked confidence, blaming the placement process. The teacher gives this boy extra projects out of class to try to help him realize his potential.

F. Controlling and motivating students

The subject teacher uses assessment to both control and motivate; however, he only recognizes the motivating function of his assessments. An upcoming test is mentioned frequently as a spur to reading and homework preparation. When students receive their graded assignments back to correct, the possiblity of those same questions appearing on the unit test is announced. On one occasion, when handing out an assignment, the teacher urged the class to really put some effort into it and promised, if the homework results showed sufficient understanding of the material, he would not give a chapter test that week, but merely integrate the chapter into the three-chapter unit test that would come up later in the month. Thus, assessment it used for motivating the class, both positively and as punishment.

Additionally, negative reporting is omitted, in order to motivate. The school provides forms to advise students and their families of impending failure for the grading period. The subject teacher pointed these forms out as an example of negative effects of grading. He does not send failure warnings, rather he calls the student in to conference and then calls the parents to discuss "progress" and "improvement needed," rather than failure.

During class periods, assessment is frequently used to control the class. The unruly, the uninterested, the sleeping may be called upon, out of any pattern of order, to recite in class. Since the teacher regularly records responses to questions in his grade book, questioned students are put on notice that their behavior has an impact on their grade.

G. Evaluating instruction (see also I.B., diagnosing group needs--some overlap)

The teacher responded inconsistently. Asked whether he ever changed instruction based on assessment, the subject reacher replied, "constantly." But (as the discussion under I.B. has detailled), this was not apparent. In an earlier interview, when asked whether daily assignment results might influence instructional decisions, he construed the question to refer to further assessment decisions and stated that, while homework would rarely alter what he would do in class, its results "tell me what I need to test for." That is, assessment is used to plan assessment.

It seems improbable that major revision of instruction was undertaken, since a pre-set schedule for material coverage was closely adhered to, but perhaps specifics of lecture and discussion were amended based on test results. Re-introduction of widely-missed questions into a later test was, indeed, apparent. (See I.B., above, for details of observation.)

H. Communicating achievement expectations

Observed only in remarks to the classes that they should "know this for the test."

I. Communicating affective expectations

At the beginning of the year the teacher set standards for behavior and for affective characteristics such as effort, seriousness, neatness in his three-page "Classroom Procedures" manual. Written assignments, for example, are required to be in pen, to be neat, have specific margins. Students can lose points if the don't follow these rules; during the observation, a student lost point because he had not remembered to put his name on the assignment papers.

Within an apparently rigid grading system, in which each piece of paper, each question has a point value, the teacher allows for extra credit and gives some extra points for improvement. As he says to the class, as well as to me in interview, no extra points is "the way I like it," but sometimes it does happen. He gave fairly substantial credit to a couple of students for extremely marginal extra-credit reports, because they finally showed themselves willing to take on the job and he had been trying to get them more interested all year.

The teacher also guards against lowering academic self-concept through grading and reporting of failures. He takes special care to find some things to comment positively on in assignments and tests of students he is trying to encourage. And, generally, he does not count off for poor spelling and syntax, although he regards it as his duty to mark them. If he counted off for those things, it would, he feels, discourage effort and interest and, especially, cause the students to write less, when he is trying to get them to write more.

J. Providing test-taking experience

Not apparent

II. ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

A. Assessment of achievement

1. Teacher-developed paper and pencil tests and quizzes

These are short answer, matching exercises, identifications. The teacher likes "writing" tests, as the students are "more creative."

He tests every 5 to 6 days. These are chapter tests. Unit tests cover about three chapters of text and occur at least once a month.

2. Text-embedded paper and pencil tests and quizzes

The text-embedded materials are use more for homework assignments, which are also graded. He is concerned about security of tests and this book has been used now for five years, so he regards it as no longer useful. And, the true/false, fill-in-the-blank, definition sorts of questions in the text materials he thinks of as more suited to assignments preparatory to testing.

3. Performance assessments

The two performance assessment methods regularly used in this classroom are oral questioning as a measure of attention, etc. and student oral reports. Oral report days take up one to two class days per chapter in economics, i.e. one set approximately every two weeks. The teacher judges seniors more capable of this work than younger students. In history they are somewhat less frequent, but used as the basis for "current events day" every third Friday.

In the oral reports a small group of 2-4 is asked to read on a topic or, in economics, to prepare one of the textbook's "case studies" (small examples of actual cases of application of the economic principles under study). The students are expected to summarize, to answer pre-set questions, and--at least in theory--to lead the discussion. In fact, the teacher regularly preempted the student-led discussion (sometimes despite student complaint) to conduct his usual routine of oral questioning, addressing his questions exclusively to the presenting group.

These oral reports are graded. The teacher reports he looks for content, demonstration of understanding of the reading, and research accomplished, if that was part of the assignment. The students are required to hand in the notes they report from and these constitute one-third of the grade. Two-thirds of the credit is based on the performance.

Questioning turn strategies varied considerably from day to day. On a grading day he often picks out five to seven students to "concentrate on." This becomes, for that group, a major assessment of class participation--which he reports may constitute a third of their grade. Other times he may just go down the rows, recording responses.

At still other times, when he is not trying to assign a specific number of points or keep track of number of opportunities to recite, he takes a mixture of volunteers and called-on students. Usually, volunteers can answer the questions, called-ons cannot. Calling on students who are not paying attention is a commonly used motivation or disciplining tactic. Boys recite more, both in volunteering more often and being called on more often. After such general questioning sessions, the teacher often records point marks for recitation after class for students who have recited a lot or often called on, apparently based on some general impression of their participation.

4. Oral questioning strategies

Oral questioning is the most common use of class time. This is how the teacher instructs the students on the text material. He rarely lectures, although sometimes a longer discourse sets the stage for a series of questions. Responses become part of the grade; at least twice a week the teacher has his grade book right at the lectern and records every correct and incorrect response. Other days the teacher may, after class, write down some credit for students who have been participating well.

5. Standardized tests

Standardized tests are not administered in the social studies department. This teacher would like to see one created, but his colleagues are not interested. He is looking forward to the imposition of a state minimum competency test for social studies.

6. Group assessment methods

These are not a major feature of the classroom. In the oral reports, some consideration is given to the fact that it has been group work, but to the extent possible, the efforts of each member of a reporting group are individuated.

7. Opinions of other teachers

This teacher has virtually no contact with colleagues. There are no scheduled meetings of the department. Their only joint work this year has been selection of the new U.S. history texts, a committee on which the subject teacher sits. He does not seek out any formal or informal consultation with colleagues and, in fact, only very rarely leaves his classroom.

8. Assessment of reasoning skills

The teacher acknowledges the importance of testing for a variety of skills, noting that the principal holds this as a high priority. The school-mandated final exam in American history is checked over by the principal and this, the teacher reports, is what he is looking for. Otherwise, the teacher does not seem to be too concerned on a day-to-day basis with reasoning skills. He appears to regard use of his own short answer ("writing") tests, as opposed to the text's multiple choice, true/false, and idenification tests as sufficient.

9. Regular assignments

This teacher gives three to four graded homework assignments weekly. These are intended to assure preparation, to focus students' attention on what he regards as the major points of the reading, and to give him an idea of "where they are" in their comprehension of the material. Considerable class time is devoted to oral questioning for correcting missed answers on returned assignments, which then are turned in again.

Most assignments are text-embedded materials, though the teacher also makes use of questions he writes himself.

10. Student peer rating

Not used.

11. Student self rating

Not used.

14. Strategies for integrating assessment and instruction

The only things I can think of here are oral reports, i.e. covering the material through graded student performance, oral questioning, oral correcting of assignments and tests.

15. Dealing with cheating

There are strict rules for make-up tests and assignments that are designed to inhibit cheating. Make-ups are almost always different from scheduled tests and are changed from year to year.

Some students are placed in front seats or away from friends, in order to limit their cheating from one another. During tests, students whose desks are too close are asked to move. During tests, however, the teacher works at his desk most of the time and does not monitor the class closely; cheating is rampant.

B. Assessment of affect

1. Observing individual students

Sleeping, acting out, etc. are monitored, sometimes addressed, and occasionally become part of the students' assessment. The teacher, when annoyed, calls on a misbehaving student for an answer to an oral question, knowing that the student will have no idea what the question was. The failure to respond correctly is recorded, often with an oral admonishment.

The teacher makes use of the 20-statement multiple choice supplement to the grade report. It consists largely of affective statements. Even though he is critical of the form, he tries to check at least one statement--usually something about "in-class behavior" on each report.

2. Observing group interactions

Not used. Students are not expected to interact in this class; it is very teacher-student oriented.

3. Using questionnaires

Not seen.

4. Using interviews (formal and informal)

This teacher relies extensively on conferences with students. Some of these take place during class time, when the rest of the group is working on reading or homework. Most are held privately, before and after school and during the teacher's free periods. Several student conferences were scheduled every day during the observation period.

At these conferences, students review their progress, check on their grades, request extra credit work, discuss their in-class behavior (at the teacher's request), and may talk about problems outside of class that are impacting their success. The teacher regards family and personal problems as a major determinant of student achievement and classroom behavior and seeks to draw this information out of the students, in order to take it into account in decisions about, for example, delaying due dates for work, permitting extra credit, and allowing repeat of work.

5. Opinions of other teachers

Generally, neither valued not sought. However, the teacher does look through student records in the main office at the beginning of the year. While test scores are his primary interest, he does occasionally find remarks of former teachers helpful in his own sizing up process.

6. Opinions of other students

Not valued, in fact avoided.

7. Opinions of parents

This teacher tries very hard to engage parents' interest in their children's educational process. He keeps a list of all home phone numbers at his home telephone and makes, he estimates, an average of about three parent calls each night. He is interested in the parents' assessment of their child, but more important is their level of commitment to assisting the teacher by monitoring homework, encouraging the student, etc.

The teacher recalls cases in which his and parents' opinions of a student's ability were in disagreement--parents both underestimating and overestimating the child's potential. He tries to get parents to think as highly of their children as possible, since he regards motivation and self-confidence as keys to success.

8. Past student records

Records are used only for sizing up of students whom he feels may be misplaced or may have some serious reading, writing, or other academic problem. He consults the school records in the third week of the year, looking especially at overall achievement results and reading test scores. He regrets that these data are not current for his students. Occasionally he finds teacher comments in the files of value as well.

9. None of these aspects are "measured". This response reflects what the teacher takes into account, based on general impressions gained through classroom observation and conferences with students.

C. Assessment of ability

1. Meaning of ability

Potential to perform the work, if the student has favorable environmental conditions and motivation; demonstrated by verbal and writing skills and general knowledge.

Although the teacher insisted he was not measuring anything but achievement in his grades, two inconsistencies emerged. One is the question of extra credit (see I.C., above). The second is the differing amount of personal effort he was putting into his students on his own time. Asked why he spent so much time cajoling, encouraging, and meeting with one student, he responded that the boy is "bright," though he misses lots of class and does not do the work. With regard to another, rather disruptive student, the teacher pointed him out to me as someone with more "ability" than his work evidenced, judged from the boy's verbal skill. He was able to discuss current events, making his points emphatically, if not argumentatively, although he did not read the assignments.

2. Decisions influenced by results

In this response, instructional strategies that are obviously influenced are calling students in for conference, expending extra effort one-on-one, offering extra credit work and agreeing to requests for extra credit assignments. Oral questioning appears to be influenced as well, students whom the teacher regards as "bright" often called on when they are daydreaming or misbehaving, in order to try to bring them on task (either by embarrassing them or by reminding them of his belief they can do it), while other off-task students are simply ignored or verbally admonished. Grouping for instruction is affected by the teacher's desire to put some of these students with unrealized potential into groups with high achieving and/or hard working students, in order to evoke their participation in the task.

D. Text assessments (See II.A.13 for details, this is overlap.)

Text tests are not used, but only because of concern for cheating, not test quality. All text-embedded assessment materials reviewed were all recall.

III. CRITERIA FOR SELECTING ASSESSMENTS

Criteria for selecting assessments were difficult to discern. The teacher was not articulate about this in interview, indeed, appeared to regard the query as irrelevant to his work. I conclude that the selection of assessment methodology is fixed by long practice and not subject to review on his part. The teacher regards all his assessments as fully objective, whether paper-and-pencil, oral reports, or class recitation.

The considerations that did surface had less to do with the appropriateness of the method to the content, than with periferal issues. For example, he made up his own paper-and-pencil tests because those that came with the textbooks had been used before. Next year, when they have a new text, he may use them. He noted ease of scoring as a factor, as well as time it takes in the classroom. These factors seem to determine how many questions are given and limits writing to short responses.

G. Degree of objectivity

The teacher believes that objectivity is the crucial factor in testing and that all his assessments and his grading system are completely objective. It is unclear where some of the extra credit points fit into this scheme. Apparently it is at least partly out of concern for objectivity that the teacher restricts his testing to recall.

IV. QUALITY OF ASSESSMENTS

(I have construed the percentages as proportional ratings.)

A. Paper-and-pencil assessments

Cognitive levels: Text-embedded study questions for a sample history chapter consisted of 21 recall questions and 26 definitions. All quizes and tests observed were recall short answer questions. Assignment sheets, text-embedded or teacher-developed were recall.

Assessments did tend to match the instruction, since it was by and large recall as well. In history class oral questioning sessions, three-fourths of the questions were recall. In economics recall was solicited in about two-thirds of the questions. Other questions called for opinions from the students, primarily evaluation and comparison.

Directions: Students have plenty of opportunity to ask for clarifications, before and during work on assignments and tests. Directions are quite clearly outlined verbally.

See II.A.13, above.

The classroom procedures manual details the grading system: what percent of points are required for each grade, what will be graded, how credit is apportioned.

Reproduction: Teacher-developed assessments, printed on the teacher's dot-matrix printer, contained some errors of spelling and syntax. Whether written on the board or from his computer, all assessments are legible.

B. Performance assessments

The classroom procedures manual gives written definition of how the oral reports are to be constructed and how much they count, but does not offer the strategy for evaluating them (one-third for notes and two-thirds for "presentation") that the teacher says he uses. That is not recorded anywhere.

C. Oral questions

Supportive reaction: Correct responses were more often followed by a verbal comment than were wrong answers. Correct responses solicited a comment such as "ok," "yes," "good," but often just a follow-up question to the same student. Wrong answers evoked a negative comment re the student's attention or preparation or, most frequently, simply the same question put to another student. Questions from the teacher following oral reports were more interactive than general recitation. There was more verbal evaluation of the answers by the teacher.

Cognitive levels: By and large, oral questions address recall (see IV.A.). In the follow-up to the oral reports there is more use of higher order questions, students on the panel asked to evaluate, to compare, justify their opinions with arguments.

Performance records: The teacher makes obvious use of the grade book during selected oral questioning sessions, recording each student's right or wrong response. A typical graded recitation session had 50 possible points for those students selected for grading. After non-recorded questioning sessions the teacher often placed points in the grade book for students who had responded well and noted those who were unable to respond correctly.

Sampling: When not explicitly selecting a sub-set of students for grading, oral questioning tends to be conducted on the basis of volunteering. In history, about four-fifths questions in such sessions were answered by volunteers. Some students shout out answers, when a classmate is slow to respond.

V. FEEDBACK PROCEDURES

A. Oral and nonverbal feedback (see also IV. B. and C., above; some overlap)

This teacher is very concerned with students' privacy, especially with regard to their assessments. Grade reports were scheduled to come out during the observation period and, in a session prior to their being mailed out to students' homes, the teacher spent class time calling each student to his desk where he wrote down their grade and point standing on slips of paper. Several times he reiterated that "Your grades are your grades and not to be shared with others." Questions about grades and progress are referred to private conference.

B. Written feedback

The data here are thin. Generally, assignments and tests seen received only a letter grade, although the teacher stated in interview that he tries to make a positive comment on each paper. However, it was clear that the most important criterion for the teacher is that written feedback is positive in tone. Negative feedback, he feels, does nothing by discourage interest and effort (e.g., see above, re the failure warning reports).

VI. DESCRIPTION OF TEACHER AND ASSESSMENT

A. Teacher's background

2. Two courses on evaluation and measurement many years ago in college and one in-service after arrival at this school. He regards them to have been of little value.

B. Time expenditure

Here I have construed "teaching activities" to exclude time spent in and out of class on non-instructionally-related activities, such as reading announcements, letting students fill out senior popularity questionnaires, etc.--a total of quite a bit of time.

1. One-on-one teaching is conferences with students.

2. He spends several hours every night, as well as his free periods working on assessment and instructional planning. The largest proportion of this time is spend correcting and writing assessments. Also, parent contact is an important use of time; he makes two to three calls each night.

This section addresses how the students' time is spent, at least their in-class time (for which we have data). In these classes time usage varies greatly by day and breaks down as follows:

Instruction	10-60%	(of this total, approximately 20% is lecture in economics, 30% in history; 70% is oral questioning)
Assessment	17-85%	(excluding test days, but including giving out assignments, correcting assigments and tests, answering questions about assignments, tests and grades; in economics, includes student oral reports*)
Other	4-30%	(mostly roll taking, announcements, interruptions such as phone calls, but also reading and homework preparation time)

* These oral reports are more assessment than instruction, since the teacher goes over the material again, either in lecture and oral questioning to the class or in expansions on questions put to the presenters.

C. Teacher characteristics

Attends to exceptional student: This teacher asks questions of the students most likely to know the answers and, especially, to be willing to engage in discussion. He seeks to motivate students who are "bright," but not working, calling them into conference. He does also take pains to offer his "Skills Emphasis" students the extra assignments and opportunities to write that the counsellors recommend for them.

Expectations of professional self/ Structure needs/timeliness. flexibility/ attributions of student success & failure: This is a highly structured classroom system--a fixed grading policy, a set schedule for progress, pre-planned instrucctions and assessments. It is the same from class to class and, it possible to infer, from year to year. Use of time is frequently referred to; desired testing outcomes are the object of instructional questioning. The teacher believes that part of his job is to train juniors and, especially, seniors to be responsible for themselves: They are expected to look up missed assignments, arrive on time for class with their books, pens and papers, to meet appointments made for conferences. The teacher is also more comfortable with a structured setting. However, it often breaks down in class, the students drawing the teacher away from the planned instruction onto other topics and acting disruptively; this is some sort of game in which they get him to fail to impose his structure on them. There appears to be no assessment punishment for this behavior--these are the "bright" students.

The teacher takes his charge very seriously. He would like to have a more standardized, department-wide curriculum, but as it now stands, he is satisfied to completely cover the text material. He takes responsibility for student progress. "It's up to the teacher to teach it," he says, and he spends many hours working with individual students and trying to engage their parents in their progress.

VII. TEACHER'S PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

Feedback needs: These are highly individual. He feels that all students need some positive feedback, but some seek it all the time and others are more independent. This need for confirmation he regards as an index of maturity. For example, one sophomore who was enrolled in junior history kept asking from more comments on her work, more questions to answer in class, additional assignments to do--she is "young," he says.

Parental expectations: Generally, the lack of parental interest is a very serious concern for this teacher. He blames divorce and family problems for many of his students' failure to take an interest in their schoolwork. A minority of parents he describes as highly involved, but most are difficult to engage, even though he requests conferences on the students' grade reports and calls parents to discuss progress and how they might help. Parents who are interested usually have a fairly accurate picture of their children's potential, but he has some who think that their child is far brighter than is the case and, occasionally, parents who underestimate their child. Overall, he wishes for higher parental expectations, since they motivate the children to do better.

Teacher's definition of success: (1) Achievement: "What counts is the final result, what they've learned overall." No single assessment indicates very much. He's succeeded if "they learn that there's lots they don't know." (2) Performance: If there are lots of volunteers and a wide show of interest, then the class is successful. (3) Thinking skills: Achievement must demonstrated, that's most important, and it's demostrated when a student "looks back on his own" and brings material from earlier in the year into current discussion, "as his own application." (4) Affect: When a student comes to cooperate in his/her own learning process, that's successs, to "do an assignment they've refused to do before," when they show "increased motivation."

VIII. ORIGINS OF POLICY

Testing

State: Minimum competency test is in preparation, but not yet used.
School: Final exam is required for American history by the school principal. Percent of grade is set by him as maximum 30 percent; he reviews exams drawn up by individual staff. Teacher's rule in final is maximum of 10 percent.

Reporting

District: District requires grade reporting 4 times for 9-week periods. They do not require that a specific grade be tied to some specific percent. Use of the "Comments Report" computer multiple choice form is also optional, though recommended. Teacher always uses it.

Homework

Class Size

District: There are "guidelines," but the union has not been able to get contractual limits as yet.

Selection for Special Programs and Recognition

Recognition: No information
District/School: It is districtwide policy that counselors place students in accelerated/skills emphasis/advanced year classes. At this school, this is strongly emphasized, teachers not even having recommendation power. The teacher tries to get students to request replacement themselves.

Attendance

District: Policies are generally set by tne district.
School: Specific counting of latenesses, opportunities to make up work are subject to school policy, but the teacher basically does what he judges best on a case-by-case basis.

Content to be Taught

State: Approves a list of acceptable texts to be selected from by districts.
District: Approves a list of acceptable texts to be selected from by schools.
Department: Committee recommends texts, selection ratified by department vote.

Discipline

District/School: All discipline procedures are specified by the district and applied to building conditions by the school. However, the teacher takes some initiative personally, requiring, for example, that a student come in before or after school to do an assignment, if the work has not been coming in or if he has doubts about whether the student is doing it him/herself. The teacher also uses classroom behavior and work completion as criteria for granting or denying such privileges as library passes. He also makes personal judgments about the worthiness of excusing students for other school activities, based on how he values the activity and how often the student is absent from class.

PROFILE OF SOCIAL STUDIES CASE #2

I. ASSESSMENT PURPOSES

A. Diagnosing individual student needs	Uninformed		X				Well informed
	Irrelevant					X	Relevant
	Useless					X	Useful
	Not used			X			Used frequently
B. Diagnosing group needs	Uninformed		X				Well informed
	Irrelevant					X	Relevant
	Useless					X	Useful
	Not used		X				Used frequently
C. Assigning grades	Uninformed		X				Well informed
	Irrelevant				X		Relevant
	Useless					X	Useful
	Not used					X	Used frequently
D. Grouping for instruction within class	Uninformed		X				Well informed
	Irrelevant			X			Relevant
	Useless		X				Useful
	Not used		X				Used frequently
E. Identifying students for special services	Uninformed			X			Well informed
	Irrelevant		X				Relevant
	Useless					X	Useful
	Not used		X				Used frequently
F. Controlling and motivating students	Uninformed	X					Well informed
	Irrelevant					X	Relevant
	Useless				X		Useful
	Not used					X	Used frequently
G. Evaluating instruction	Uninformed	X					Well informed
	Irrelevant					X	Relevant
	Useless			X			Useful
	Not used		X				Used frequently
H. Communicating achievement expectations	Uninformed			X			Well informed
	Irrelevant					X	Relevant
	Useless					X	Useful
	Not used			X			Used frequently

I. Communicating affective expectations	Uninformed	X					Well informed
	Irrelevant		X				Relevant
	Useless			X			Useful
	Not used				X		Used frequently
J. Providing test-taking experience	Uninformed	X					Well informed
	Irrelevant				X		Relevant
	Useless	X					Useful
	Not used	X					Used frequently

K. Relative importance of purposes

Given "100 importance points" to distribute across the purposes listed below, how would you distribute those points to reflect the relative importance of the decisions listed?

Diagnosing individual needs	5
Diagnosing group needs	2
*Assigning grades	60
Grouping for instruction	0
Identifying students for special services	1
Controlling and motivating	10
Evaluating instruction	1
Communicating achievement expectations	15
Communicating affective expectations	6
Test taking experience	0
	100 points

*Grades 58%; measure achievement 2%.

II. ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

A. Assessment of Achievement

1. Teacher-developed paper and pencil tests and quizzes	Uninformed	X					Well informed
	Inappropriate			X			Appropriate
	Useless					X	Useful
	Not used					X	Used frequently
2. Text-embedded paper and pencil tests and quizzes	Uninformed	X					Well informed
	Inappropriate				X		Appropriate
	Useless				X		Useful
	Not used					X	Used frequently
3. Performance assessments	Uninformed		X				Well informed
	Inappropriate				X		Appropriate
	Useless				X		Useful
	Not used				X		Used frequently
4. Oral questioning strategies	Uninformed		X				Well informed
	Inappropriate				X		Appropriate
	Useless					X	Useful
	Not used					X	Used frequently
5. Standardized tests	Uninformed		X				Well informed
	Inappropriate			X			Appropriate
	Useless					X	Useful
	Not used	X					Used frequently
6. Group assessment methods	Uninformed			X			Well informed
	Inappropriate				X		Appropriate
	Useless				X		Useful
	Not used			X			Used frequently
7. Opinions of other teachers	Uninformed	X					Well informed
	Inappropriate			X			Appropriate
	Useless	X					Useful
	Not used	X					Used frequently
8. Assessment of reasoning skills	Uninformed	X					Well informed
	Inappropriate					X	Appropriate
	Useless				X		Useful
	Not used	X					Used frequently

9. Regular assignments	Uninformed		X				Well informed
	Inappropriate					X	Appropriate
	Useless					X	Useful
	Not used					X	Used frequently

10. Student peer rating	Uninformed	X					Well informed
	Inappropriate			X			Appropriate
	Useless	X					Useful
	Not used	X					Used frequently

11. Student self ratings	Uninformed	X					Well informed
	Inappropriate			X			Appropriate
	Useless	X					Useful
	Not used	X					Used frequently

12. Proportion of all assessments for all purposes that are of various types

Teacher-developed paper and pencil tests	35
Text-embedded paper and pencil tests	10
Performance assessments	5
Oral questions	15
Standardized tests	0
Opinions of other teachers	0
Regular assignments	30
Group assessments	5
Student peer ratings	0
Student self ratings	0
	100%

13. Cognitive levels of questions posed in:
(N.b. restatement of categories)

	Assignments*	Study and Discussion Questions		Oral Questions**	Tests and Quizzes***
		Text-embedded	Teach.Devl.		
Recall	74%	96%	100%	65-75%	100%
Analysis	2%	--	--	10-15%	--
Comparison	8%	4%	--	15-25%	--
Inference	--	--	--	--	--
Evaluation	12%	--	--	--	--

*Both text-embedded and teacher-developed.

**Higher figures reflect senior economics classes. Most non-recall questions were put during follow-up to oral reports and addressed only to the students in the reporting group.

***All teacher-developed.

14. Strategies for integrating assessment and instruction	Uninformed	X					Well informed
	Inappropriate					X	Appropriate
	Useless				X		Useful
	Not used		X				Used frequently
15. Dealing with cheating	Uninformed		X				Well informed
	Inappropriate					X	Appropriate
	Useless					X	Useful
	Not used				X		Used frequently

B. Assessment of Affect

1. Observing individual students	Uninformed		X				Well informed
	Inappropriate					X	Appropriate
	Useless			X			Useful
	Not used				X		Used frequently
2. Observing group interactions	Uninformed	X					Well informed
	Inappropriate				X		Appropriate
	Useless		X				Useful
	Not used	X					Used frequently
3. Using questionnaires	Uninformed	X					Well informed
	Inappropriate			X			Appropriate
	Useless	X					Useful
	Not used	X					Used frequently
4. Using interviews (formal and informal)	Uninformed		X				Well informed
	Inappropriate				X		Appropriate
	Useless					X	Useful
	Not used					X	Used frequently
5. Opinions of other teachers	Uninformed	X					Well informed
	Inappropriate				X		Appropriate
	Useless	X					Useful
	Not used	X					Used frequently
6. Opinions of other students	Uninformed	X					Well informed
	Inappropriate			X			Appropriate
	Useless	X					Useful
	Not used	X					Used frequently

7. Opinions of parents

Uninformed			X			Well informed
Inappropriate			X			Appropriate
Useless					X	Useful
Not used					X	Used frequently

8. Past student records

Uninformed		X				Well informed
Inappropriate					X	Appropriate
Useless					X	Useful
Not used		X				Used frequently

9. Checklist of affective characteristics measured (considered):

X	Seriousness of purpose
X	Motivation and effort
X	Attitude
	Learning style
X	Interests
	Values
	Preferences
X	Academic self-concept
	Locus of control
X	Anxiety
X	Maturity
	Social skills
X	Study skills
	Other (specify ______)

Code:
F = formal assessment conducted
I = informal assessment conducted
X = Not measured

10. Relative importance of affective assessment methods:

Observing individual students	40
Observing group interactions	5
Using questionnaires	0
Using interviews (formal and informal)	35
Opinions of other teachers	0
Opinions of other students	0
Opinions of parents	10
Past student records	10
	100%

C. Assessment of Ability

1. Meaning of ability for teacher
Value of this factor for the teacher

Important		X				Unimportant

Measurement of ability

Measured formally ____
Measured informally ____
Not measured __X__

Ingredients considered in assessment of ability, if measured:

	FACTOR(S) INCLUDED IN ASSESSMENT	MEASURED HOW?--none really measured
1.	Verbal ability	Observation, repartee
2.	General knowledge, especially of current affairs--learning without reading for content	Class discussion
3.	Language barriers--non-native speaking students who manage are regarded as intelligent	Class discussion, conferences
4.	Parental involvement--if they are not assisting in motivation & the students does well, it is from strong ability	Conversations with parents
5.	Confirmation from parental examples of the student's ability, e.g., stories of early reading, outside interests	Conversations with parents

2. Check decisions influenced by results (i.e., change with varying levels of ability).

__X__ Instructional objectives
__X__ Instructional strategies
__X__ Grouping for instruction (within class)
____ Methods for measuring achievement
__X__ Grading standards
__X__ Students selected for special services
__X__ Other (specify time and effort expended by teacher on the student)

D. Text Assessments

Checklist of assessment components provided with text

Available	Used	
X		Oral questions for class use
X	X	Homework assignments
no info		General assessment guidelines for teachers
X		Paper and pencil tests
		Performance assessments
no info		Scoring guidelines
no info		Quality control guidelines
		Other (specify ____________)

III. CRITERIA FOR SELECTING ASSESSMENT METHODS

A. Results fit purpose	Uninformed	X					Well informed
	Unimportant					X	Important
	Not used		X				Used frequently
B. Method matches material taught	Uninformed	X					Well informed
	Unimportant			X			Important
	Not used		X				Used frequently
C. Ease of development	Uninformed		X				Well informed
	Unimportant					X	Important
	Not used				X		Used frequently
D. Ease of scoring	Uninformed			X			Well informed
	Unimportant					X	Important
	Not used					X	Used frequently
E. Origin of assessment	Uninformed	X					Well informed
	Unimportant				X		Important
	Not used				X		Used frequently
F. Time required to administer	Uninformed			X			Well informed
	Unimportant					X	Important
	Not used				X		Used frequently
G. Degree of objectivity	Uninformed	X					Well informed
	Unimportant					X	Important
	Not used					X	Used frequently
H. Applicability to measuring thinking skills	Uninformed	X					Well informed
	Unimportant			X			Important
	Not used	X					Used frequently
I. Effective control of cheating	Uninformed		X				Well informed
	Unimportant					X	Important
	Not used				X		Used frequently

J. Relative importance of criteria

Results fit purpose	18
Method matches material taught	10
Ease of development	5
Ease of scoring	10
Origin of assessment	10
Time required to administer	15
Degree of objectivity	20
Applicability to measuring thinking skills	2
Effective control of cheating	10
	100%

IV. QUALITY OF ASSESSMENTS

A. Percent of paper and pencil assessments (teacher-developed or text-embedded) having the following characteristics (need not total 100%):

%	
50	Clear description of assessment specifications
90	Matches content of instruction
90	Matches cognitive levels of instruction
80	Minimizes time required to gather needed information
80	Item format matches desired outcome
90	Items clearly written
50	Items sample domain
70	Scoring procedures planned
N/A	Scoring criteria written for essays
80	Clear directions
60	High quality reproduction
50	Test scheduled to minimize distractions

B. Percent of performance assessments having the following characteristics:

%	
20	Clear description of trait to be measured with levels of proficiency articulated
	Matches intended outcomes of instruction
100	Minimizes time required to gather needed information
80	Clear performance criteria
80	Students aware of criteria
10	Thoughtful exercises yield performance samples
10	Exercises sample performance domain
80	Performance rating planned
50	Results match information needs

C. Percent of oral questions having the following characteristics:

%	
40	Sampling methods cover range of achievement levels of students
10	Strategies involve everyone
30	Teacher waits for response
50	Student's response given supportive reaction
70	Questions match cognitive levels of instruction
90	Written performance records maintained

V. FEEDBACK PROCEDURES

A. For oral and nonverbal feedback

Percent of feedback delivered to students who are:

%	
75	Strong (vs. weak)
70	Correct (vs. incorrect)
60	Male (vs. female)

Percent of feedback having the following characteristics:

%	
20	Delivered in class (vs. out of class)
50	Oral (vs. nonverbal)
20	Public (vs. private)
80	Fair (vs. unfair)
60	Focused on achievement (vs. affect)
70	Germane (vs. irrelevant)
60	Immediate (vs. delayed)
60	Positive (vs. negative)

B. For written feedback

Percent of feedback delivered to students who are:

%	
30	Strong (vs. weak)
30	Correct (vs. incorrect)
50	Male (vs. female)

Percent of feedback having the following characteristics:

%	
10	Comment (vs. symbol)
20	Positive (vs. negative)
90	Fair (vs. unfair)
70	Germane (vs. irrelevant)
90	Focused on achievement (vs. affect)

Uses samples of performance as feedback — Never _X_ ___ ___ ___ ___ Frequently

Uses public achievement chart as feedback — Never _X_ ___ ___ ___ ___ Frequently

VI. DESCRIPTION OF TEACHER AND ASSESSMENT

A. Teacher's background

1. Teacher experience, number of years:

20+	Overall
20+	At grade level
12	In school
5	With content

2. Relative contributions of various sources to teacher's knowledge of assessment methodology

%	
5	Teacher preparation training
0	Inservice training
0	Ideas and suggestions of colleagues
0	Professional literature
10	Teacher's guide to textbooks
85	Own experience in classroom
100%	

B. Teacher's expenditure of time

1. Proportion of time spent in teaching activities

%	
20	Planning
10	Teaching (one on one)
40	Teaching (group)
30	Assessing (see list below)
0	Other (specify ______________________________)
100%	

2. Proportion of time spent in assessment activities (paper and pencil, performance assessment, oral, assignments)

%	
5	Reviewing and selecting assessments
20	Developing own assessments
15	Administering
35	Scoring and recording
20	Providing feedback
5	Evaluating quality
100%	

C. Teacher characteristics

Role in the classroom	Curriculum maker and presenter	___	___	X	___	___	Servant of policy delivering required content

Expectations of professional self	Expects little			X			Expects a great deal
Structure needs	Rigid	X					Flexible
View of high quality performance	Correctness demanded		X				Degrees of quality eval.
Stereotypic view of students	None				X		Expressed often
Attends to exceptional student	Never					X	Frequently
Sense of performance norms	Unclear			X			Very clear
Orientation to experimentation	No risks	X					Risk taker
Orientation to cheating	No concern			X			Major concern
Amount of cheating	None					X	A great deal
Value of promptness; importance of timely work completion	Unimportant						Important
Interpersonal environment of the classroom regarding assessment:							
Cooperative	None		X				Frequent
Competitive	None			X			Frequent

Attributions for reasons of student success/failure:

20 Due to student
80 Due to teacher
100%

Basis for grading students:

20 Sense of ability
80 Demonstrated achievement
100%

Interpretation of assessment:

10 Norm-referenced
90 Criterion-referenced
100%

VII. TEACHER'S PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

A. Ability to learn	Low			X			High
	No variation					X	Great deal
	Variation ignored			X			Addressed
B. Willingness to learn	Low			X			High
	No variation					X	Great deal
	Variation ignored		X				Addressed
C. Rate of achievement	Low			X			High
	Decreasing		X				Increasing
	No variation					X	Great deal
	Variation ignored		X				Addressed
D. Maturity	Irresponsible		X				Responsible
	No variation				X		Great deal
	Variation ignored			X			Addressed
E. Study skills	Undeveloped			X			Developed
	No variation					X	Great deal
	Variation ignored		X				Addressed
F. Social skills	Undeveloped			X			Developed
	No variation					X	Great deal
	Variation ignored	X					Addressed
G. Willingness to perform	Reticent			X			Willing
	No variation					X	Great deal
	Variation ignored		X				Addressed
H. Feedback needs	Weak				X		Strong
	No variation			X			Great deal
	Variation ignored		X				Addressed
I. Self-assessment skills	Undeveloped		X				Developed
	No variation			X			Great deal
	Variation ignored	X					Addressed

J. Sense of fairness	Unclear			X			Clear
	No variation		X				Great deal
	Variation ignored	X					Addressed
K. Reaction to testing	Tranquil			X			Anxious
	No variation				X		Great deal
	Variation ignored	X					Addressed
L. Parental expectations	Unclear			X			Clear
	Low			X			High
	Unimportant					X	Important
	No variation					X	Great deal
	Variation ignored				X		Addressed

CHAPTER 4. COMPARING CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT ENVIRONMENTS

In this chapter we explore similarities and differences across the eight profiles of classroom assessment environments. The exploration begins with comparisons of the two profiles within each of the four subject matter areas. Then it turns to an analysis of patterns across all eight environments, focusing on each of the key ingredients in the profile: assessment purposes, assessment methods, criteria for selecting methods, quality of assessments, the teacher's relationship to assessment, the teacher's perceptions of students and the role of policy in classroom assessment.

Throughout this discussion, reference will be made to patterns seen in what teachers tend to do or not do, what they know, think and feel about assessment and how they integrate assessment into instruction. Patterns discussed are those of the eight high school teachers studied only. Generalizations to any population of teachers beyond this small sample may not be warranted.

As a result, some of the assessment phenomena reported and some of the conclusions drawn may represent speculations on our part as to the true nature of classroom assessment. These tentative conclusions are collected in this chapter in an attempt to begin to bring some order to our understanding of the very complex world of classroom assessment. However, until our conclusions are verified by other researchers in other contexts, we must remain cautious about their implications for teacher training.

Comparison Within Subjects

Math. The two math cases are strikingly similar. Both are experienced teachers who are very clear about assessment purposes and methods. They measure student achievement (not ability) using math problem sets in which students must show all work for the purposes of diagnosing student needs and assigning grades. The attainment of grades is the motivating force in both environments.

The assessment of affective characteristics is also similar and very straight forward in both contexts. If students are doing the work on a daily basis, they are judged to be serious of purpose and are thought to be trying. This can influence grading decisions.

Both teachers are adamant about using test problems that clearly reflect desired outcomes of their instruction. Each tends to focus on math problem solving processes and wants to test those processes. They feel that the text-embedded tests do not provide this, so they develop their own exercises. The result is paper and pencil assessments that are of high quality in both cases. They learned to develop these tests through experience in the classroom. Formal training played no role in their assessments.

One area where the two differ is in their interactions with students using oral assessments during instruction. One teacher tends to ask rhetorical questions which he does not expect students to answer. He answers them himself. The other teacher uses these assessments to focus the attention of inattentive students, turning misbehavior into an apparently intense student/teacher learning interaction.

Both teachers spend a good deal of their instructional time (up to 1/3) involved in assessment-related activities. Since they have so many years of experience, are so clear on objectives, and have developed assessments frequently in the past, little assessment time is spent developing assessment. In both cases, a majority of assessment time is spent scoring, recording and providing feedback.

Finally, neither teacher is impacted to any great extent by policy. They use the required text and report grades when required. Beyond these, they are unaware of and inattentive to other existing assessment policies and guidelines.

Science. The nature of the discipline of science and the study of biology may account for the similar curricular, instructional and assessment practices used by both these teachers. Indeed, at the time of the observations both groups of General Biology were studying genetics. Both teachers conduct labs, put the weekly agendas on the board, give considerable homework and check it daily, conduct assessment in a rather fixed manner, maintain a predetermined schedule and rate of material coverage, integrate assessment into instruction similarly, use a notebook as a summative evaluation activity and put a great deal of responsibility for the learning upon the shoulders of the students. They rely primarily upon the assessment of performance by way of student products to determine understanding and to assign grades. Both teachers give considerable weight to student effort and participation as they affect the quality of a student's learning experience as well as the final evaluation. Even their weaknesses are similar. For instance, each could improve upon the recordkeeping of student participation and the oral questioning of students. They might also inform students more carefully about criteria and engage students more actively in the assessment process.

While these two biology courses are quite similar in terms of assessment, it is evident that students in these two settings are having quite different biology experiences. Students in the first case not only have a more rigorous academic course, but they are actively involved in the construction of their own learning. They are engaged in a team effort yet are demonstrating independence of thought and are expected to be as creative and curious as they can possibly be. Even if they are getting C's in the course, the teacher feels confident that they are achieving his goals of acquiring an attitude, appreciation or love of science, or, at the very least, of nature studies. Certainly the teacher makes a persuasive case for assessing without the use of paper and pencil tests. In the second case, the range of student experiences is quite narrow and, while students may be having a challenging experience in terms of work demands, there is little opportunity for creativity, higher cognitive operations, or independent thinking.

Language Arts. The two language arts teachers observed for this study enjoy both the subject matter they teach and their students. Although both of these teachers teach other subjects, their main interest is teaching literature and their primary concern is to awaken their students to an appreciation and enjoyment of good literature. These teachers are rather similar in their views of the purposes of assessment. They use assessment primarily to diagnose group needs, evaluate instruction and communicate achievement expectations. Unlike most of the other teachers observed in this study, they do not place high emphasis on assigning grades. Both dislike the grading process and attempt to diminish its importance in students' eyes by using a point system and emphasizing completion of assigned work (and thus engagement with the subject) more than the specific grade received. Both of these language arts teachers inform their classes that they would be happy to give "all A's" and that one just has to work hard to do well in their classes. The teachers differ somewhat on their use of assessment to diagnose individual student needs; the Case 1 teacher is more concerned with attending to individual students and makes greater use of assessment for that end.

In terms of the methodology they use to assess achievement, both teachers prefer to use tests, quizzes and study questions they have developed themselves. They both make heavy, daily use of oral questions, for assessment and as an instructional tool. (Indeed, in both of the language arts classrooms assessment and instruction appear to be well integrated and the teachers adjust their instruction according to the results from the various assessments they use.) Oral questioning lends itself well to the study of literature. However, both teachers also use oral questioning in their other classes (composition and the study of mass media). The Case 1 teacher makes greater use of oral questioning than does the other teacher. Although both teachers are skillful in the use of this technique to assess student and group knowledge and progress, neither teacher routinely keeps written records of these daily assessments. (The Case 1 teacher has a column in her gradebook for oral participation, but the record consists of a "global" checkmark for the quarter or the lack of a checkmark.) Neither seems to be aware of the problems inherent in mental recordkeeping.

Both teachers employ questions (oral and written) that tax a variety of cognitive levels. The Case 1 teacher states explicitly that her main purpose in teaching is to get the students thinking and synthesizing ideas and she looks to see how what they are learning is changing their thinking. This explicit purpose is reflected in the fact that she uses a better balance of higher order thinking skill questions in her assessments than does the Case 2 teacher. Both, however, rely heavily on the use of recall questions. This appears to be a necessary management tool--to check that the students are actually reading the assignments.

The use of performance assessments in these two classrooms is very limited. The nature of the subject matter (language arts) would allow much more extensive use of this type of assessment (demonstrating mastery by writing in genres such as essay, poetry, satire, short story, for example, or reading aloud).

These teachers are very similar in the methodology they use to assess affective factors. Here again, the Case 1 teacher tends to give greater emphasis to observing individual students, where the Case 2 teacher pays greater attention to group interactions. Regarding the assessment of ability, the teacher in Case 1 seems more concerned with the ability of her students than does the Case 2 teacher. On an individual student level, both believe every student has the ability to achieve and perform adequately in their classes. The apparent importance of ability in Case 1 emerges when the teacher considers her students as a group. She constantly compares them with other students she has had in the past (and at another school) and feels she has had to lower her expectations and change her teaching to meet the level of her current students. However, ability is inextricably entwined with achievement and willingness to perform. The lack of a clear understanding of the concept of ability and a clear separation of it from other more legitimately assessable constructs is problematic. It is difficult to determine the influence the teacher's view of ability truly has on her assessments.

Regarding selection of assessment methods, the two teachers are quite similar. The Case 1 teacher is generally slightly better informed and pays more attention to the applicability of the assessment method to the measurement of thinking skills. The quality of their assessments and the feedback procedures they use are generally quite similar.

Where these two teachers differ considerably is in their background: The Case 1 teacher is a seasoned veteran, having taught for 20 years and having been the head of the English Department during her career; the Case 2 teacher is in her fifth year of teaching. This difference in years of experience may explain the difference in the way the two teachers view themselves professionally. The Case 1 teacher clearly sees herself as the maker and presenter of curriculum, whereas the teacher in Case 2 considers her role more as the servant of policy delivering the required content. The Case 1 teacher has greater expectations of herself as a professional, she takes more risks as a teacher and pays more attention to individual students, even encouraging individuals to work at their own pace. She also fosters a collaborative, rather than competitive environment in her classroom. The Case 2 teacher spends far more time teaching to the group and in fact actively discourages students from getting ahead of the group.

Both feel teaching literature can be highly subjective and attempt to use objective methods in their assessments. The Case 2 teacher succeeds at this a little better than the teacher in Case 1, primarily because she relies more heavily on recall, true/false, multiple choice and short answer questions in her tests and quizzes. The Case 1 teacher makes far greater use of essay questions, which tap into higher order thinking skills, but which are more difficult to score objectively. In their essay scoring, both teachers use what appears to be "holistic" scoring, but their criteria are unstated. The Case 1 teacher is explicit in her technique of norm-referencing the scores by reading what she considers to be the top and bottom papers first to establish how she will score a set of papers. This apparent lack of clear criteria for essay scoring is an area that needs further study. Neither teacher receives many complaints about her scoring. This may be due in part to the fact that over time students have come to know what the teacher's expectations are.

Another area of concern in these teachers' assessment practices is their inclusion of "effort" as part of the grades they give. The Case 1 teacher clearly considers effort in determining a student's grade, particularly in cases where the student is at risk of failing but is willing to make an effort (despite a past history fraught with the lack of effort). Both teachers consider effort (motivation, willingness to perform) in borderline cases as a way of determining the final grade. Neither seem to consider the possibility that level of effort is already being reflected in each student's achievement and they might thus be assessing it twice. Also, in both cases the teachers are willing to give students the benefit of the doubt. Points, grades and assessment comments are usually used in a positive way, to motivate and encourage students.

As the above reflects, these two teachers have similar views of their students' characteristics, though the teacher in Case 1 usually has a slightly lower view of her students' skills and attitudes. They differ radically only in their perceptions of students' reactions to testing and in the level of parental expectations. These differences and the lower views held in Case 1 may well reflect the differences in the populations the two schools serve. As noted in the case study descriptions, parents in the Case 1 community tend to have low expectations for the continued education of their children, whereas the Case 2 community places a very high priority on education. The blase reactions to testing of students in Case 1 compared with the anxiety experienced by the Case 2 students is directly related to the family and community attitudes about the importance of education. The significance of the particular school/community influence on students' characteristics and teachers' perceptions of them is also suggested by the fact that the second biology case study was conducted in the same school as Language Arts Case 1 and the ratings given the two teachers' perceptions of their students by independent researchers are almost identical.

Social Studies. To a considerable extent, assessment in social studies appears to be shaped by the nature of the instructional content and by the teacher's understanding of the school's expectations for that subject. The two teachers observed for this study both teach U.S. history and economics, required subjects. However, the Case 1 teacher teaches an accelerated class, which differs greatly from Case 2's "regular" economics class and the latter teacher stated that his methods are very different for advanced groups. Therefore, the most valid comparisons can be made between the two teachers' approaches to American history. Case 1's school offers U.S. history to sophomores while Case 2's classes are juniors; it is not possible to isolate any effects of this difference in student maturity.

In both schools the emphasis in U.S. history lies heavily on factual content of the subject. One teacher (#1) uses most of the class time for lecture; the other (#2) spends most of the instructional time in question-answer, expanding on the answers (correct or incorrect) to make lecture-like reponses. The lecturer instructs by relying upon the students' ability to read and assimilate the text material as the basic overview of the content, choosing selected points to expand upon in class that go far beyond the level of detail that the survey text offers. He balanced this technique with a chapter review assignment which directs the students to the text material they are expected to have learned. The teacher who relies on oral questioning generally follows the content outline of the text as he proceeds, thus providing the students with a daily model of the content for which they are held responsible. His questioning so closely follows the text, in fact, that many students follow along in their books in order to anticipate answers to the upcoming oral questions. This teacher does not provide a review assignment before tests.

Teacher #2, the oral questioner, works to integrate assessment and instruction to a greater extent than the lecturer. He overtly records marks for responses to questions in many of his class sessions and he uses the instructional time to develop the points that are to appear on the tests. In some cases, he reported, areas which emerges in oral questioning as things the students have not prepared or do not understand will become test items. Remarks like, "Think about this for the test," are not uncommon. The lecturer depends on the homework assignments, especially the review exercise to direct students' attention to the required content. Neither teacher makes significant efforts to revise instruction based on assessment, although teacher #2 reported that he occasionally does recap based on poor homework results.

Although presentation techniques vary, expectations for what will be tested are similar and equally clearly, though differently, articulated. Both teachers test frequently, relying on chapter tests and unit tests (encompassing 3-4 chapters), a structure dictated by the textbook. Their tests, too, bear resemblence: They are tests of recall, using fill-in-the-blank and very short answer questions, matching tasks, chronological ordering tasks, and short (3-5 sentence) essays. If the two teachers were using the same texts, their students would probably perform similarly on one another's tests; even with different texts, the same content was emphasized for the historical periods observed.

American history is a core high school subject and, in both teachers' view, essential as preparation for responsible adult life in the U.S. They take their charge very seriously and appear to have in their minds some set of material that every high school graduate ought to have learned about his/her nation. It is that content that they seek to teach. Both feel that their textbooks contain this requisite content and that their job is to assure that the students learn it. Thus, as American history teachers, they have clear concepts of their charge for the year and that charge consisted largely of a body of specific information. It is not surprising, then, that their tests are almost exclusively recall tasks. Just how it is that the teachers expect their students to make use of this historical overview to guide their lives as citizens remains unclear. Such skills are not taught in American history.

Thus, both teachers' assessment methodologies are driven in part by accountability concerns. They see themselves as accountable for the factual content of American history. Both also express the need to have a large number of grades recorded that they themselves can regard as "objective" and therefore reliable measures of student achievement. Teacher #1 stated that he does not have the skills to write valid questions that test higher order thinking skills, although he tries (unsuccessfully) to integrate them into his tests. Teacher #2 depends on regular point grading to back up his grading decisions; he feels he needs to be able to demonstrate meticulous objective grading to protect himself from grade complaints. Both teachers lack understanding of methods for testing higher order thinking and for preparing valid performance assessments.

Perhaps because of the heavy stress on recall and on "objective" questions, the two teachers share concern about test security. Each devises his own tests. They also share lack of concern about security for their homework assignments, relying on the text-embedded materials for most of these. Homework is a regular activity in both classes and an essential component of the overall assessment.

Both social studies teachers reported that they conducted a sizing up exercise at the beginning of the term. In both cases this appears to have been, at least in part, a free writing activity, one of the only times students were asked to write essays. It is interesting that they relied on essay writing as an indication of overall readiness for the class, but do not employ essay writing as an assessment. This may relate to the concerns about accountability and objectivity noted above.

Finally, both teachers articulated in interview and in class, strong beliefs that one of their tasks is to bring their students to take responsibility for themselves and their own educations. They see high school as a transition ground between childhood and adult responsibility and their professional charge as high school teachers to instill self-dependence and maturity in their students. They choose strikingly different strategies for this task.

Teacher #1 employs a distanced, professionalized relationship with the students, setting clear rules and requiring reasoned, documented excuses for exceptions to these rules. He brooks little personal interaction or misbehavior in his classes, modeling, it appears, a controlled, on-task self-presentation as adult and responsible behavior. Students are directed to the school counselors for any non-content issues.

Teacher #2 attempts to instill self-responsibility through interpersonal closeness, rather than distance. He takes responsibility for the students' learning onto himself, spending a great deal of time working individually with students, trying to establish a network of student support with parents, and providing in-class time for joking, teacher-student and student-student interaction, and relating his personal view of history. He reported that students need to know someone really cares about them and their achievement and uses his own concern as a motivator. While the rules in his classes are equally clear and documented, this teacher is prepared to make exceptions if students try to show that they do care about their work and are trying to improve. He offers extra credit opportunities as a carrot to students who are willing to put in extra effort. For teacher #2, affective variables such as effort become part of the overall assessment, used as a strategy for promoting students' sense of control over and responsibility for their own educations.

Comparing Assessment Purposes Across All Subjects

Several patterns emerge in these eight studies regarding assessment purposes. The teachers use assessment most commonly to assign grades and communicate achievement expectations. Teachers are generally explicit in communicating grade expectations. As examples, they use written grading policies, sample problems and review, written assessment tasks and tests to give students a sense of what is important to know.

The grading of academic achievement dominates almost all environments despite the fact that teachers dislike grading. Several teachers believe grading to be a bureaucratic requirement that is counterproductive to their goals for teaching, while others devise elaborate schemes to resolve issues of fairness and objectivity. All, however, keep records on student performance for the purpose of compiling the final grade. There is considerable variation in how elaborate these records are and how much information is collected to determine the grade.

Measurement for grading purposes is almost completely criterion-referenced in the sense of the use of percent cut-off scores. However, objectives are often somewhat vague as are criteria for performance. Cut-off scores for grades vary greatly, although some are fixed by policy. Teachers vary in their consistency in applying cut-off scores. Affective and personality factors, such as motivation, effort, or a teacher's sense of a student's capabilities, influence grades. Further, teachers demonstrate considerable discretion in compiling information for the purpose of determining grades. Grades serve to send many different messages to students, only some of which relate to achievement and teachers often use their authority to communicate both affective and academic expectations to students through grades. Teachers are not often challenged to explain a grade to either student, parent or administrators nor are teachers likely to check out the effects of grades upon students.

The teachers studied appear not to be responsible for assessment for the purposes of grouping, selecting for special services and providing test-taking experiences. Role differentiation in the secondary school influences these assessment purposes. Students are often "tracked" or channeled by guidance counselors and once placed the teachers generally treat the entire class as a group.

There is considerable variation across teachers in assessment for the purposes of diagnosing, controlling and motivating, evaluating instruction and communicating affective expectations. Diagnosing is more often done during instruction using information generated through methods such as oral questions, review of homework and individual conferences. There is an affective component in nearly every assessment environment and it tends to focus on such attributes as attentiveness, effort, participation or seriousness of purpose. This assessment feeds directly into decisions about grades, as mentioned above.

Assessment Methodology

Assessment of Achievement. Across classrooms, teachers spend about a quarter of the available instructional time on assessment-related activities. This ranks in importance just behind whole group instruction.

Methods used to measure achievement on a regular basis across subjects include daily written assignments, paper and pencil tests and oral questions as assessments. On the other hand, these teachers tend not to rely on standardized tests, group assessments, opinions of other teachers or student peer assessments. A great deal of variation was seen across teachers in teachers' reliance on performance assessments, student self-assessments, and text-embedded tests.

Performance assessments (measures based on observation and judgment) are used to measure achievement in language arts, science and social studies, but not in math. Student self-assessment varies across teachers in that some teachers leave it up to their students to let the teachers know if they are having difficulty. Reliance on text embedded assessments varies as a function of the availability of such assessments. Those who use texts that have accompanying assignments and tests use them to varying degrees, while those who do not have them available obviously do not use them. Textbooks tend to serve more as a source of daily assignments than of tests per se. These teachers tend to want to develop their own tests.

Perhaps the most important problem noted in these classrooms is that teachers sometimes use assessment methods without sufficient understanding of how to use them well. For example, it is not uncommon for teachers to espouse the importance of teaching higher order thinking skills, only to measure recall of facts and information, unaware that a discrepancy exists between the two. The result is invalid assessment. Further, teachers who rely on performance assessment methodology almost universally do so without explicit performance criteria or with vaguely defined criteria. When this occurs, the danger of invalid and unreliable assessment is great. In other cases, teachers report using assessment based on group activities or projects resulting in judgments of individual student performance and seem unaware of the complexities of sorting out differential contributions of group members to overall project success. And finally, oral questions during class, while used most often as instructional rather than assessment devices, are conducted with virtually no written recordkeeping systems when used as individual student assessments.

On the positive side of achievement assessment, teachers tend to develop their own paper and pencil tests to be sure the tests reflect the content they emphasize in class. Further, the paper and pencil tests tend to be of fair technical quality (clear items, appropriate formats, etc.). In addition, they tend away from objective tests and toward performance and other assessments when outcomes warrant it. Finally, they tend to focus their assessments on actual demonstrated classroom achievement specifically defined, rather than on vaguely defined concepts of student ability.

Assessment of Affect. Affective assessments contribute greatly to the nature, role and quality of classroom assessment environments. These measures focus predominantly on the students' seriousness of purpose, level of apparent effort and attitude (strong or weak, positive or negative feeling about the teacher and/or the subject). These factors are measured by observing the rate and quality of student work and through interpersonal contact with the student. Results influence student grades and teacher expectations of students.

Within the affective dimension of classroom assessment, two issues emerge as worthy of further consideration. The first issue revolves around a dangerous pattern noted in several classrooms in the linkage between affective assessment and the school reward system. There appears to be a stereotypic personality type among high school students that teachers respond favorably to. These are the students who appear attentive and aggressive during class and who therefore receive higher grades than others, not because they've learned more of the material but because they've learned to act like they are learning more. The implicit message communicated to these students seems to be "You don't have to learn as much if you look like you're trying." Once they read the message, they may learn that they can manipulate classroom affective assessment to advantage. This is dangerous because it may be that white, male students are more prepared culturally to fit this stereotype than white females or members of minority groups. This may lead to sex and ethnic inequities in assessment and grading systems. This is a complex issue that deserves further investigation.

The second issue is similarly complex. The reward system of classroom assessment environments appears to operate on the assumption that a simple relationship exists between grades and student motivation. The assumed relationship holds that if students know a grade is linked to some particular behavior (e.g., studying for a test), then students will behave accordingly to obtain the reward. But, in fact, it appears that the actual behavior/reward relationship is far more complex than this. For good students, those with a record of high achievement, that simple relationship probably holds--they will work to get another rewarding A. However, the complexity emerges when we consider those students whose experience has been one of failure--not success. These are the students in the lower half of the distribution of achievement. Many teachers relentlessly cling to the premise that grades serve to motivate these students to learn also when for many that simply is not the case. For many, grades are a punishment--a constant public reminder of failure--not a reward. Working hard seems to have produced only failure in the past, so why bother. Once a student loses grades as a reward, since this is the only motivating tool used by many teachers the motivation to continue to study is lost and frequently so is the student. If we are to overcome this problem, researchers and teachers alike need to develop a clearer understanding of the relationship between grades and affect (motivation and attitude) at all achievement levels--not just for high achievers.

Criteria for Selecting Assessment Methods

Teachers across high school subject matter areas seem quite consistent in the factors they consider in devising or selecting assessments. Factors typically given careful consideration are time available for assessment, the match between assessment and instructional objectives, including applicability to assessment of thinking skills and appropriateness for a given purpose. Factors also considered include degree of objectivity and origin of the assessment. Factors considered less frequently include ease of development and scoring and the need to control cheating.

However, it is important to note in this context that, while these are the criteria often considered, the extent to which they are met varies greatly. For example, as noted above, while teachers intend to measure higher order thinking skills, often they are unsuccessful in doing so. Further, while many strive to remain objective, vague performance criteria often give rise to unreliable, subjective judgments. In short, striving to apply the proper criteria does not ensure success.

Quality of Assessments

As has been suggested above, the quality of the assessments observed varied. Some assessments--typically daily assignments and tests of the paper and pencil variety--were generally sound across subjects. The major exception to this conclusion is the extent to which these assessments measured thinking skills. Examples of good quality performance assessment were noted, but most suffered from vaguely defined performance criteria and rating procedures. Oral questions were occasionally used as assessment devices, often with no attempt to gather a representative sample of student responses and with no written recordkeeping. In fact, it was generally the case that the teachers observed had spent very little time reflecting on the nature or quality (validity, reliability, and communication value) of their assessments prior to participating in this study.

Within this dimension of classroom assessment, some important and pervasive attitudes about assessment were noted. First, objective assessment formats tend to be accepted by teachers as dependable just because of the format and regardless of other qualities of the assessment. For this reason, objective tests tend to be preferred by all. Essay tests and performance assessments, on the other hand, tend to be seen by teachers as subjective and therefore less acceptable merely as a function of format regardless of other attributes. For this reason, they feel they minimize use of these assessments.

Students seem less sensitive to this distinction. Whether the test is objective or subjective, students do not question or challenge the teachers' performance criteria or assessment methods. Even in the face of subjective assessments and vague criteria, students seem to unquestioningly accept the teacher's assessment authority. While they may comment among themselves about the apparent lack of fairness of an assessment, they do not comment to teachers about this.

Other quality control issues worthy of mention include the following:

- As mentioned previously, teachers tended to rely on mental recordkeeping to manage some kinds of performance information, such as responses to oral questions or behavioral indicators of affective traits such as attitude. These teachers remain unaware of the dangers of bias inherent in such recordkeeping methods.
- In addition, some assessments, particularly daily assignments are often quite short (sometimes two or three exercises). The dependability of grades entered into the gradebook for such assignments must be questioned.
- Further, weighting schemes are popular in establishing grades at the end of grading periods. However, teachers using these schemes are often uninformed and uncertain about how to operationalize their priorities in creating a weighted composite index of student performance.
- Affective assessments are based on various kinds of measures: records of work completion, behavioral observations or personal interactions. To provide sound information, these assessments must be valid and reliable. However, quality control in this arena of assessment often receive little or no attention. Further, questionnaires--a very efficient way to gather affective data--are virtually never used.

Feedback Procedures

The frequency and mode of feedback varies greatly from teacher to teacher, but, generally, feedback is fair, germane to achievement, and immediate. Feedback is used as a motivational tool, as well as a report to students on their achievement.

Both in class and in conference, strong students and students with correct answers receive more oral and nonverbal feedback than those who are weak or give incorrect answers. Correct answers tend to elicit some positive response from the teacher, e.g., "ok," "good," but incorrect answers are most frequently simply passed over--the question is asked of someone else or the teacher supplies the answer. Strong students get greater feedback because they are more often correct, but also because they may also give more elaborated responses than do weak students, even when the latter offer correct answers.

Generally, oral and nonverbal feedback is positive, focused as it tends to be on stronger and more correct students.

However, some teachers try to use oral feedback to admonish off-task students, using negative gestures and facial expressions as well. Oral feedback to the class and to individuals is also used to attempt to instill motivation. Discussion of the results of tests or assignments often has an evaluative component and teachers may report their overall assessment of group progress, in addition to going over the correct answers.

Written feedback, by contrast with oral feedback, tends to be more extensive for the weaker students. On assignments, wrong answers or overall poor papers are more likely to receive a comment in addition to the grade or point score, than the papers of stronger, more correct students, for which teachers appear to feel a symbol suffices. Teachers are especially likely to comment when weak students' work is atypical--either better or worse than their usual effort. Most comments are corrective, rather than positive. Such comments are generally fair and focus directly on achievement. Overall, written feedback is regular--most assignments are marked with at least a symbol--and students get feedback in a very timely fashion.

Samples of performance and such public devices as public achievement displays are little used as feedback mechanisms in these high school classes. Indeed, much of the feedback is private, rather than public. Student papers are carefully handed back individually and some teachers emphasize verbally that "your grades are your own," so the marks should not be shared with others. Private conferences outside of class time or at the end or beginning of class periods are common. Choice of private over public feedback appears to reflect several teacher concerns: the need to protect students' academic self-concepts; a desire to increase student self-responsibility; teachers' general desire to deemphasize grading; and teachers' need to protect their accountability by minimizing student comparisons and appearance of inequity among grades. These factors may also be involved in teachers' tendency to provide oral feedback to strong and correct students, as noted above.

In grading, teachers appear generally to be willing to give students the benefit of the doubt. If students have questions or complaints about grades, these are carefully listened to and, if the arguments are persuasive, teachers tend to be flexible. There is little evidence of use of grading for giving punitive feedback to students.

The Teacher and Assessment

Teacher's Background. All of the eight teachers observed during this study were seasoned, experienced teachers. The number of years of teaching experience ranged from 5 to 33 years, with seven of the eight teachers having taught for more than 15 years. Half of them have spent their entire teaching careers at the same school.

All of the teachers feel they have received very little useful training in assessment methodology. Their training to become teachers did not prepare them to address the assessment questions they face daily in the classroom and contributed very little to their knowledge of assessment issues and techniques. Similarly, only two of the eight teachers have benefited at all from inservice training about assessment. Ideas and suggestions from colleagues and the teacher's guides of textbooks are seldom used resources, and almost no one consults the professional literature on assessment. Indeed, with regard to assessment and grading, teachers work in extreme isolation, generally without the benefit of colleagial collaboration. The Biology Case 2 teacher's receptiveness to working with her new colleague is evidence of the positive effect such collaboration can have.

Teachers' knowledge of assessment methodology, then, is based overwhelmingly on their own classroom experience. The methods they use to assess and evaluate their students are the result of years of determining what works for them in the classroom and what they feel comfortable doing. Much can be learned from teachers' experiences and practical classroom applications of assessment techniques. However, as we have seen in the preceding eight case study descriptions, some teachers may not be aware of the pitfalls or implications of some of their methods, and what appears to be sound assessment is not always done for the right reasons nor always consistently recorded.

Teacher's Expenditure of Time. Not surprisingly, teachers spend a considerable amount of their time in assessment-related activities. On average, these teachers devote nearly a quarter of their time to assessment. The rest of their time is taken up in group instruction (nearly 40%), one-on-one instruction (15%), and planning (20%). Of the time spent on assessment activities, the biggest block of time (about one-third) is devoted to scoring and recording results. The amount of time spent on this varies, of course, from teacher to teacher depending on the number and type of assessments conducted. One would expect more time to be spent on scoring and recording essay tests than on objective, machine-scored tests, for example. Thus, one might expect math or science teachers to spend less time on this activity than language arts or social studies teachers. In these case studies, such clear patterns were not always apparent, in part because some science and math teachers spend most of their assessment time on scoring and recording and relatively little time on other assessment activities such as selecting assessments or developing their own.

Teachers in these case studies spend about 20% of their assessment time developing their own assessments. Administering assessments and providing feedback consume approximately equal amounts of time (20% each). Little time is given to reviewing and selecting assessments (10%) and even less to evaluating the quality of the assessments (5%).

Teacher Characteristics. These eight teachers differ widely in their views of themselves and their students and the classroom environments they have created. Half of the eight teachers work very autonomously, taking full responsibility for developing the curriculum and presenting it. Three of the eight, however, tend toward the opposite role of acting as a servant of policy who delivers the required content. Most expect a great deal of themselves as professionals. All have a relatively clear sense of performance norms; these are often unwritten, however. Their views of what constitutes high quality performance vary considerably, ranging across the spectrum from demanding only one correct answer to accepting degrees of quality. As might be expected, similar variation exists in these teachers' needs for structure and in their willingness to experiment.

These differences do not appear to be related to subject areas. As the case study descriptions illustrate, one of the math teachers is flexible and creative, willing to experiment with different types of assessments, whereas the other maintains a highly structured, rigid assessment environment. Similarly, the two biology teachers observed differ dramatically--one being highly innovative and flexible, the other conducting a strict routine of structured assignments and tests. In social studies both teachers are rigid in the structure they have established for their classes, but one was somewhat willing to experiment when students requested a different but reasonable approach. In language arts, the differences between the two teachers are not as clearly drawn as they are in the math and science cases. Both English teachers are relatively flexible, ready to adjust their instruction and even their assessment schedules as necessary for optimum learning; one of the teachers, however, is far more flexible and willing to experiment and take risks than the other.

Most of these teachers highly value promptness and timely completion of work. The only exception is the Language Arts Case 1 teacher and even though this teacher is very flexible on this point, she still makes note of late papers. The interpersonal dimensions of the assessment environments created by these eight teachers also vary considerably and do not follow any patterns related to subject area. In some classrooms, very little cooperation occurs or is encouraged, in others it is frequent. The amount of competition among students varies even more from classroom to classroom. The frequency of competition appears to be less than that of collaboration, however. Surprisingly enough, teachers seem relatively unconcerned about cheating. This may be because nearly all of them are interested in teaching the students to be responsible for their own learning. This orientation is reflected in the number of teachers who attribute the lion's share of the responsibility for success or failure to the students themselves. Only one of the eight would take the bulk of that responsibility on himself.

With the possible exception of the Social Studies Case 1 teacher who attempts to remain disengaged from his students, these teachers all enjoy their students and would like them to do well in their classes. Nearly all of these teachers operate with some preconceived or stereotypic views of their students. Only the Biology Case [illegible] teacher appeared to be free of stereotypes; but only the Math Case 2 teacher expressed them often. Most teachers tend to express these views when thinking of groups of students, but seem able and interested to deal with individual students and their particular needs when time permits. Some teachers (such as the math teachers, the Social Studies Case 2 and the Language Arts Case 1 teachers) were far more willing to attend to individual students than were others. Stereotypic views can and do influence instruction and assessment in some of these classrooms. The lowered expectations of the Language Arts Case 1 teacher and the Biology Case 2 teacher (both of whom were teaching at the same school) may be based on past experience with what students in their school actually achieve or are willing to achieve, but such expectations may not be fair to individual students in their classrooms this year who struggle against that image or who would rise to meet higher expectations if they were voiced. Similarly, the Social Studies Case 2 teacher's assumptions that the boys who are acting out are "bright" may well have a detrimental effect on boys who don't act out or on girls in general because he clearly gives more attention to those highly visible boys.

Additional Comments on Teachers and Assessment. Regarding the grading process, these teachers grade almost entirely on the basis of demonstrated achievement. For the social studies and language arts teachers, their sense of the students' ability may enter into the assignment of grades. However, they tend to articulate poorly what constitutes ability and how to measure it separately from achievement or affective characteristics, such as motivation or seriousness of purpose. Students' level of effort is considered by all teachers, particularly in borderline cases. The problems implicit in including ability or effort in the grading process do not seem to be clear to these educators.

Nearly all assessment conducted in these classrooms is considered to be criterion-referenced in the sense that a certain level of performance is expected of all. However, the social studies and language arts teachers, unlike math and science, use both norm and criterion referencing. Even when teachers say they are basing everything on a percentage of the total points possible, they often have distributed the points based on the group norm. The clearest example of this is found in Language Arts Case 1, where the teacher reads what she considers the top and bottom students' papers before reading the entire set and determining how to distribute the points. There is a great need for a clearer understanding of the grading process, what is considered and how it is considered. Much could be done to help teachers analyze their own practices and assumptions.

Another concern is that teachers tend to "objectify" their assessments; that is, most are aware of the need to be objective and the perils of subjectivity and they therefore try to make their assessments as objective as possible. However, more careful analysis is often needed to determine the validity of some of the assessment methods and criteria. For example, teachers whose main purpose is to teach thinking skills may use questions which assess primarily lower level skills (particularly recall) without any awareness that their questions are not assessing what they purport to teach.

Unfortunately, in most of these case studies, instruction and assessment seem to be separate activities for the teachers. Integration of the two is done haphazardly and rarely to full advantage. Most teachers either do not take the time or do not know how to make good use of assessment in presenting instruction, in evaluating it, and in making it more effective and meaningful. The language arts teachers observed here tend to make the best use of assessment as an instructional tool and as a way to evaluate instruction and diagnose student needs.

Teachers' Perceptions of Student Characteristics

As the case study profiles illustrate, these eight teachers have widely varying perceptions of their students' characteristics. Although all feel their students have from moderate to high ability to learn, they rate their willingness to learn, their willingness to perform, and their rate of achievement a little lower. Half of the teachers see their students as relatively irresponsible; only the Biology Case 1 teacher considers his students to be responsible. In general, teachers think their students' study skills are not as well developed as their social skills, and their self-assessment skills are the least developed of these three characteristics. Their feedback needs vary across the spectrum from relatively weak to a strong need for feedback. Their sense of fairness and their reactions to testing also vary considerably.

Each teacher is faced with some (and in many cases a great deal of) variation in these characteristics among his/her particular students. Rate of achievement is the characteristic in which greatest variation is noted. However, teachers' responses to these variations range across the spectrum from ignoring them totally (even though they admit they exist) to addressing them. Teachers of a particular subject do not necessarily share the same perceptions of their students, nor do they respond in similar ways to the variations among students. The Math Case 1 teacher, for example, recognizes great variation in student traits and therefore dedicates 10-20 minutes of each class period to individual students. The Case 2 Math teacher also perceives differences among his students and attends to some of those differences in characteristics, but his cynicism about a few poor students may be coloring his feedback to all of his students. The two social studies teachers are aware of variations in their students, and both tend to ignore such variations. However, they vary considerably in the ways they conduct their classrooms—the Case 1 teacher refusing to acknowledge variations and individual characteristics so that his students will rise above those differences and take on the responsibility of learning, and the Case 2 teacher so aware of one particular group of students (the boys who act out) that he ignores most other variations among his students. The two language arts teachers tend to be most involved in addressing the variations they perceive among their students.

These teachers have been able to learn surprisingly little about parental expectations, although they think parental expectations are relatively important. They tend to think parents do not expect much of their children. The extent of parental expectations and parental involvement is related in some teachers' minds to the nature of the community served by the school. The two language arts teachers, for example, work in very different communities. The Case 1 teacher's school serves a working class neighborhood in which education has not been highly valued as one of the major paths to a successful life; this teacher's previous experience with parents at a school which served a more upwardly mobile community led her to make constant comparisons and judgments about the effects of the lack of parental involvement and encouragement at her present school. The Case 2 teacher works in a school which serves a suburban-rural community in which most parents have high expectations for their children's educations. Most teachers deal with parents when the need arises (as in cases where the student is at risk of failing the class), but have little time to do more. Their emphasis on teaching students to be responsible for their own educational experience leads these teachers to be less involved with parents. The only exception to this is the Social Studies Case 2 teacher who makes a special effort to call three parents a night. (This teacher is also the teacher who takes most of the responsibility for students' success or failure on himself.)

As noted in the discussion above about teachers' stereotypic views of students, teachers have well-established (and sometimes erroneous) views of changes in student characteristics over the years. These perceptions have a powerful influence on teachers' expectations for their current students. Teachers may be unaware of the dangers of judging individual students on the basis of apparent "trends."

Policy and Assessment

Policy is an area about which teachers appear to be relatively uninformed and about which they concern themselves very little. Even where district or school assessment and assessment-related policies exist, teachers are largely unaware of them. When they are aware of certain policies, they appear to have the autonomy to ignore them by and large. Teachers very broadly control the conduct of their own classrooms, including assessment aspects.

Grading methodology, frequency of grading, homework assignments, types of questions, etc., are largely ungoverned by policy, regardless of whether school or district policy in fact exists. The only clear requirements appear to be the quarterly or nine-week reporting period and the requirement to provide letter grades. These the teachers fulfill, albeit in many cases reluctantly. Some teachers feel responsible to have demonstrated records to back up their grade report decisions, providing extensive markings; others feel no such need, although school policies demand demonstrable bases for grades in class records.

Teachers in at least some departments appear to feel directly impacted in their assessment practices by consensual practices and agreements developed with their colleagues. In some cases these are in direct contradiction to established school or district policy. Departmental level decision-making with regard to textbooks governs much of the teachers' assessment practices, since many employ text-embedded assignments and tests. Despite these assessment implications, quality of assessments in the text are rarely a consideration in text adoption. Those involved in the selection process do not possess the skills and knowledge to evaluate tests and assignments. In only a few of the observed cases did a teacher depart from use of the departmentally-selected text; these were generally in accelerated classes, where teacher decision-making is even more strongly emphasized.

In certain areas, teachers are constrained by the roles of guidance counselors. These counselors have broad a mandate to assign placement to advanced or remedial tracks and to meet with parents and students. In general, teachers tend to accept counselors' placement decisions and work with the students as best they can. They do this despite the fact that they appear to know little about counselors' knowledge and skills for determining placements across academic subjects, criteria counselors use in making such placements, or the sources and quality of information that they use. However, in at least some schools, teachers can influence or override placements and can intervene directly with students and their parents around academic progress and disciplinary matters. For example, one teacher eschews the school's mandated warning of failing grade forms, choosing instead to make personal phone calls to the parents. This, he argues, is more congruent with his approach of trying to create motivation by developing confidence and positive attitudes to school. Teachers vary in their interest in directly dealing with parents, complaints, and student non-class issues, but they appear to have great leeway to do so, if they choose, regardless of building or district procedure as outlined in policy.

The role of principals as instructional leaders and policy makers in the assessment arena remains unknown. In only one case was it clear that a teacher's assessment policy had been affected by his principal's desires--the Social Studies Case 2 teacher included what he regarded as higher order thinking questions in his yearly final at his principal's request. Further research should address how principals supervise assessment; what knowledge they possess about good assessment; their expectations; the extent of their supervision of their teachers' classroom assessment practices; and how and how uniformly such supervision is conducted.

Summary and Implications

We began this report with the premise that there is much that remains unknown and unclear about the complex world of classroom assessment. Perhaps the primary outcome of this study is that we have developed at least the rudiments of a framework within which to understand the complexity. Using that framework, we have profiled eight high school classroom assessment environments. While we realize that eight case studies do not provide a basis for drawing firm conclusions about either the state of classroom assessment in our schools or needed action programs, we feel that some issues emerge from our analysis that deserve further attention. We present these below in the form of implications for training in assessment, assessment policy and further research on classroom assessment. While we feel confident that subsequent studies will corroborate these conclusions, we encourage and support the further research and development needed to verify or revise them.

Implications for Training in Assessment. Given the nature and limited extent of teachers' formal training in assessment methodology, consideration of how they spend their assessment time can provide some insights into teacher training needs. Perhaps of greatest concern is the fact that teachers spend so little time evaluating the quality of their assessments. Teachers with full class loads and large classes have many constraints on their time. However, knowing if what they are doing is valid, reliable, fair and useful should be of utmost importance. Teachers have not been trained in ways to do this. Many of the assessment inconsistencies observed in these case studies could be avoided or remedied if teachers received inservice training in how to evaluate the quality of assessments. This would improve the review and selection process as well as help teachers as they develop their own assessments. As we have seen, teachers often write their own tests, quizzes and study questions, with little or no formal training on which to base this assessment development. Even though teachers spend a large part of their time in assessment activities and have come to rely on their experience, most express concern and lack of confidence that they are conducting assessments properly. They would welcome further training opportunities.

More specifically, teacher preservice and inservice should focus upon topics that range far beyond developing traditional paper and pencil tests. Other important topics include:

- How to evaluate the quality of an assessment in terms of its match to intended instructional outcomes and the dependability of results. Training should focus on the teacher's own assessments as well as assessments accompanying text materials.

- How to select a type of assessment that will fit a particular purpose and do so efficiently (i.e., how to integrate assessment with instruction). Training should illustrate the full range of viable assessment options available for classroom use (assignments, paper and pencil tests and quizzes, performance assessments, published tests, self-evaluation, peer evaluation and assessment records) and show how they relate to various classroom decisions.

- How to deal effectively with the subjective elements in classroom assessment. Training should address the inevitability of subjective assessment and show how it can be done with maximum quality, efficiency and fairness.

- How to establish performance criteria as the basis for classroom assessment. Outcomes that are measurable in a valid and reliable way are those that the teacher can define and for which the teacher can articulate an underlying continuum, from low to high performance. Training should provide teachers with the tools to do this.

- When affective assessment has a role to play in classrooms and how to conduct affective assessments that are of high quality. Teachers need to openly explore and understand the nature of student affective traits and they must learn the problems and pitfalls of assessing these traits. Then and only then will they be in a position to integrate them into classroom assessment.

- How to develop and implement sound grading and other feedback practices. Training should focus on two key aspects of this: (1) the definition of sound grading practices (i.e., via sound assessment, appropriate cut-offs, appropriate weighting, etc.), and (2) the effects of grades as a motivator across all levels of achievement.

- How to understand and avoid stereotypic thinking about students and achievement or affect. Teachers need to know the dangers of typecasting students both in terms of its impact on expected and actual student performance.

In addition to these implications for teacher training, attention must also be given to assessment training for principals. If they are to be instructional leaders and if assessment occupies a quarter of available instructional time, then principals need to be able to provide leadership in assessment. Since most are former teachers, we know how little assessment training they started with. Since most principal certification programs require little or no further training in assessment, we can conclude how much leadership most principals are able to provide in this arena. If we are to attain the goal of effective assessment environments in all classrooms, this must change.

Finally, we might consider the revolutionary concept of training students in assessment. Given knowledge of the rudiments of sound assessment, they would be in a position to act in their own best interest, pointing out vague, unfair or inappropriate assessment and classroom decision-making.

Implications for Assessment Policy. For those concerned with setting district and school policy, we might pose the following questions regarding classroom assessment policy:

- Given the relative importance of classroom assessment compared to district-wide assessment in the growth and development of students, are district financial resources for assessment being distributed appropriately between the two?

- Given the relative importance of assessment-related activities to other instructional activities in the classroom, are sufficient resources being spent to develop staff skills in assessment?

- Given the importance of assessment to the quality of instruction, are text-embedded tests being systematically evaluated in the process of considering various textbooks for adoption? Should they be evaluated? If so, by whom?

- What role should policy play in determining the nature, role and quality of classroom assessment? And how should teachers be made aware of that role and the policies to be implemented?

- How are teachers currently supervised with regard to classroom assessment, given most principals' lack of training in this arena? How should they be supervised?

The danger exists that most of the key players in the policy making arena are equally uninformed regarding classroom assessment issues. Teachers are largely untrained and are left to their own devices when it comes to classroom assessment. Principals are former teachers. Superintendents and assistant superintendents are former principals. And members of boards of education are lay people untrained in education, not to mention assessment. Nowhere in the professional development of any of these policy makers is there a place where issues of assessment and evaluation are addressed in a forthright and thorough manner. Thus, the danger exists that policy may address these issues in a naive, or worse yet, technically unsound manner. Therefore, the policy context surrounding assessment in general and classroom assessment in particular deserves careful attention soon.

Implications for Research on Classroom Assessment. Through the final chapter of this report, we have puzzled at times over issues that remain unresolved in our program of research. As we continue our research in this important arena, we will be guided by unanswered questions such as these. We encourage other researchers to be similarly guided:

- Can the nature, role and quality of classroom assessment be improved via systematic and relevant teacher, principal and policy maker training?

- How extensive is the mismatch between instruction and assessment of higher order thinking skills?

- How universal and intense is teachers' dislike of grades and grading? What are students' and parents' values in this regard? What viable alternatives exist?

- What is the effect of grades on student motivation and achievement at all levels of achievement?

- What is the effect of different kinds of assessment on student preparation for and performance on those assessments?

- What is the nature and quality of assessment training provided to guidance counselors--those given responsibility for placing students in high school classes?

A Final Comment. We initiated our research with the purpose of gaining an indepth understanding of classroom assessment. We felt that a major reason for the neglect of classroom assessment by the measurement research community is its extreme complexity. We do not seek to reduce that complexity. Rather we seek only to understand it and help teachers function effectively within such a complex and demanding environment. We remain unsure as to our success. We are concerned about the reliability of our profiles. Our observations are limited to high schools (and junior highs in a previous study). And we have watched and interacted with only a few teachers. But even with these limitations, the great depth we have been able to achieve suggests that action is needed. Only the scope of that need remains uncertain.